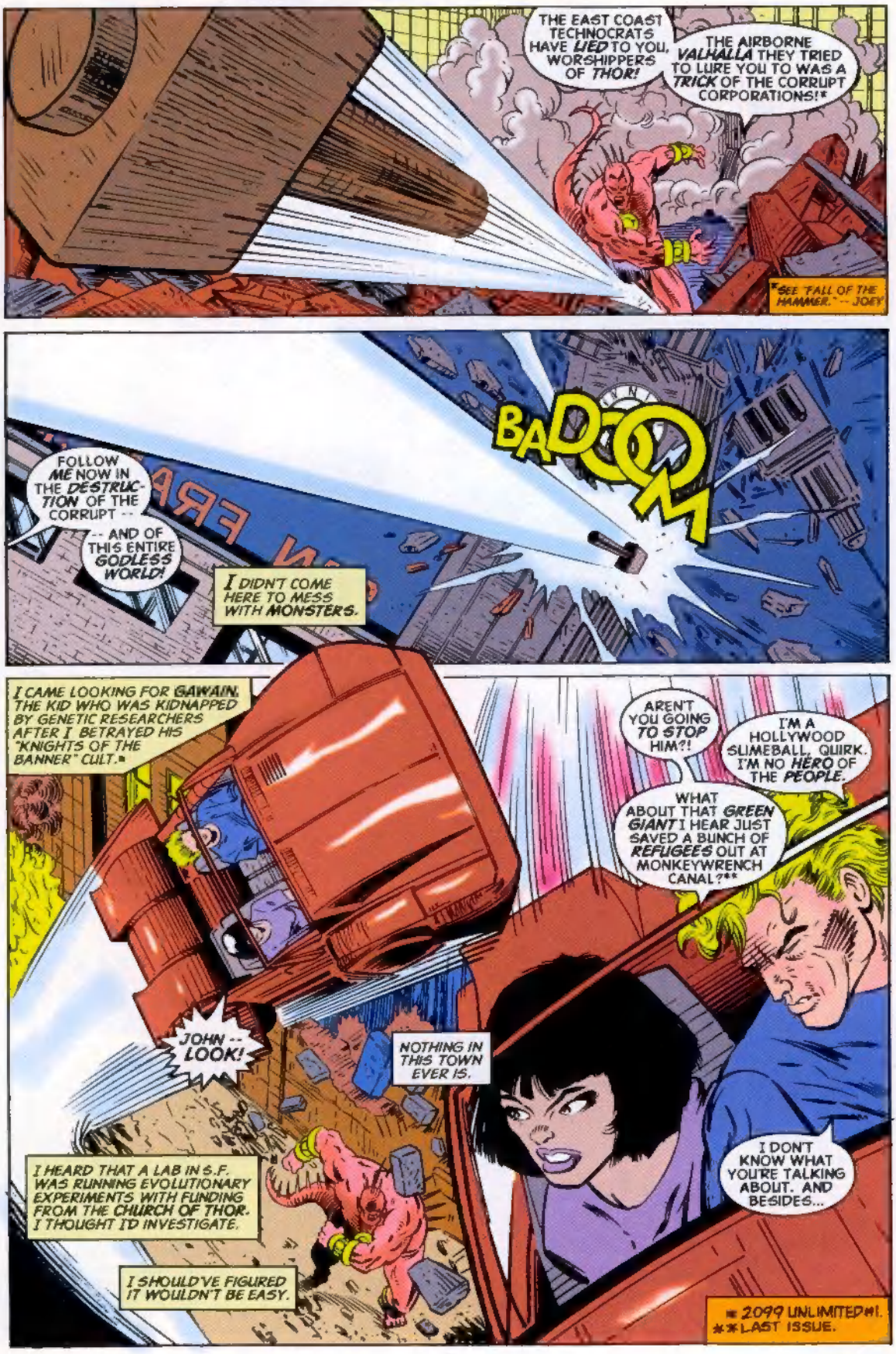
MARVEL COMICS
$3.95 US
$4.95 CAN
4
APR
UK £2.95
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
2099 UNLIMITED
HULK 2099
LACHRYMA 2099
METALSCREAM 2099
Ryan '93
3 BIG FEATURES!
DIRECT EDITION
00411

THE FALSE RAGNAROK HAS BEEN EXPOSED! LET THE TRUE RAGNAROK BEGIN!
I AM THE HEIR TO VALHALLA! I AM THE PERFECT MAN!
STAN LEE PRESENTS
HULK 2099
HAMMER'S ECHO
SAN FRANCISCO. YOU GOTTA LOVE IT.
GERARD JONES WRITER
PENCILER J.J. BIRCH
INKER MARK McKENNA
STARKINGS w/GAUSKELL LETTERERS
TOM SMITH COLORIST
EDITOR JOEY CAVALIERI
TOM DeFALCO LEADER

2099™ UNLIMITED Vol. 1, No. 4, April, 1994. Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Published quarterly. Copyright © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $3.95 per copy in the U.S. and $4.95 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. Printed in Canada.


THE EAST COAST TECHNOCRATS HAVE LIED TO YOU, WORSHIPPERS OF THOR!
THE AIRBORNE VALHALLA THEY TRIED TO LURE YOU TO WAS A TRICK OF THE CORRUPT CORPORATIONS!*
*SEE "FALL OF THE HAMMER." -- JOEY
BADOOM
FOLLOW ME NOW IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CORRUPT --
-- AND OF THIS ENTIRE GODLESS WORLD!
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO MESS WITH MONSTERS.
I CAME LOOKING FOR GAWAIN, THE KID WHO WAS KIDNAPPED BY GENETIC RESEARCHERS AFTER I BETRAYED HIS "KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER" CULT.*
AREN'T YOU GOING TO STOP HIM?!
I'M A HOLLYWOOD SLIMEBALL, QUIRK. I'M NO HERO OF THE PEOPLE.
WHAT ABOUT THAT GREEN GIANT I HEAR JUST SAVED A BUNCH OF REFUGEES OUT AT MONKEYWRENCH CANAL?**
JOHN -- LOOK!
NOTHING IN THIS TOWN EVER IS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. AND BESIDES...
I HEARD THAT A LAB IN S.F. WAS RUNNING EVOLUTIONARY EXPERIMENTS WITH FUNDING FROM THE CHURCH OF THOR. I THOUGHT I'D INVESTIGATE.
I SHOULD'VE FIGURED IT WOULDN'T BE EASY.
* 2099 UNLIMITED #1.
** LAST ISSUE.

...I COULDN'T MAKE THE CHANGE WITHOUT BEING SEEN BY ALL MY COWORKERS.
SUDDENLY THIS PLACE IS LOUSY WITH HOLLYWOOD DEVELOPMENT TYPES.
THOR GIVE ME STRENGTH!
SONY
BUT HOW COULD THEY KNOW ABOUT THIS SO FAST?
SOMEBODY HAD TO TIP THEM, THAT'S HOW. JUST LIKE THEY MUSTVE MEANT TO TIP ME.
EITHER THIS MONSTER WANTS TO BE SEEN AND PUBLICIZED -- OR SOMEBODY ELSE WANTS IT FOR HIM!
WHY? YOU SAID THOSE GENETICISTS ARE TRYING TO MAKE AN ARMY OF HULKS. COULD THIS BE --
SHAK SHAK SHAK
HUH -- ?
LOCAL SECURITY...
"...NOT HAVING MUCH LUCK."
IN THE NAME OF ASGARD...
SHAK
SHAK
SHAK
WHAM!
...YOU MUST FALL!
IN S.F. THEY DON'T MAKE SECURITY LIKE WE DO IN L.A. THEY'RE TOO MUCH INTO PERSONAL FREEDOM.

USUALLY I'D SAY THAT WAS A SWELL IDEA. THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT QUIRK HERE -- TO KEEP HER SAFE FROM SECURITY COMPANY HIT SQUADS.
WE'RE HIT!
SHARAK!
YEAH. REAL SAFE.
MY HOLLYWOOD TRAINING SAYS TWIST THE CAR TO HIT ON HER SIDE. LET HER TAKE THE IMPACT.
YHAAAA!
IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS...
KOOM
...WHEN A MAN FINDS OUT...
UNGH!
...IF HE'S REALLY CHANGED.
NICE ROLL. AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO GET BIG AND UGLY.
GLAD YOU LIKED IT. NOW GET OUT OF HERE!

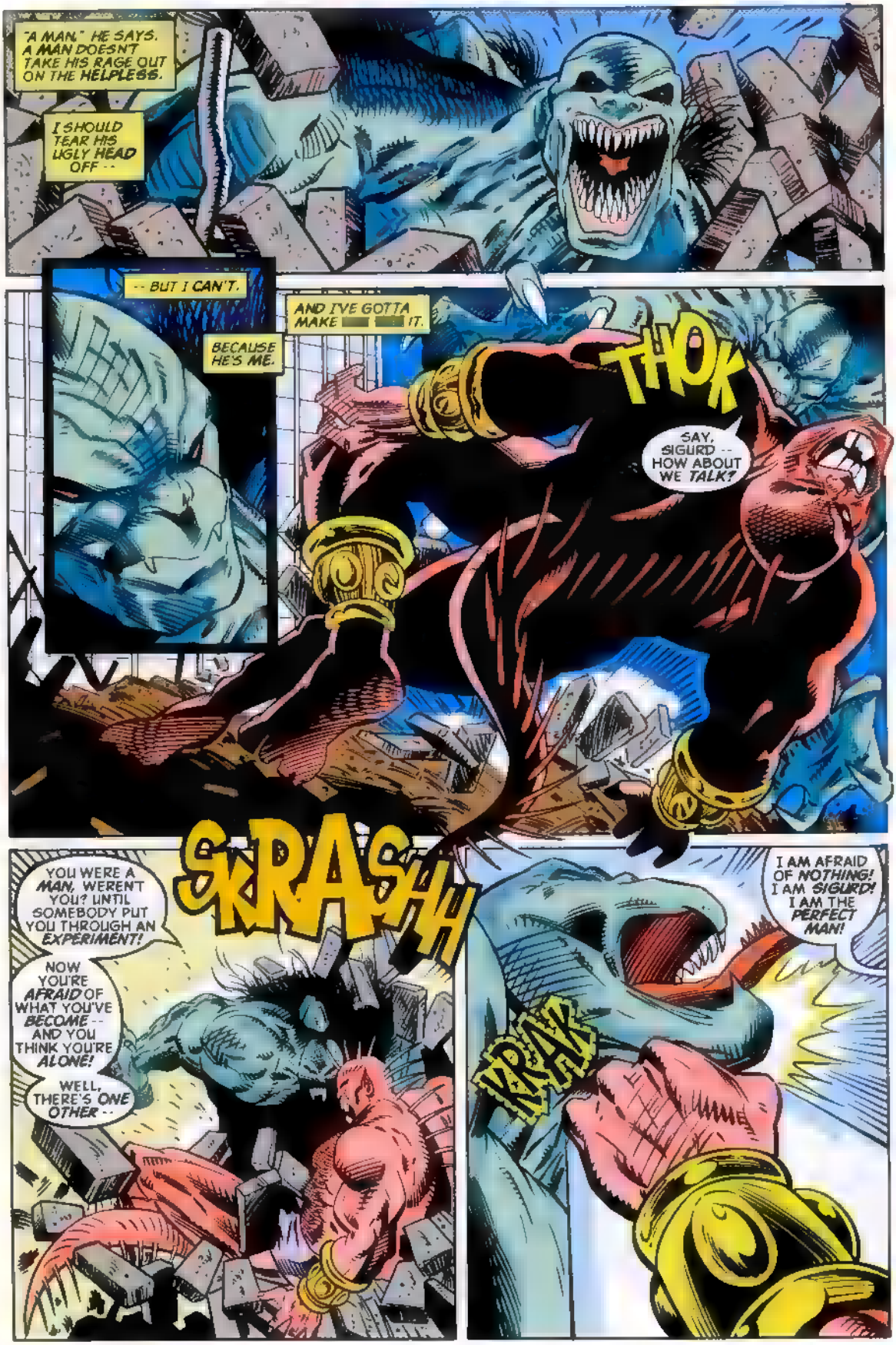
WHAT...?
I NEARLY GOT YOU KILLED IN THE THIRTY-MILE MALL.* I'M NOT GOING TO RISK YOUR BACKSIDE AGAIN.
I GOT YOU OUT OF L.A. ALL DEBTS ARE EVEN NOW. YOU CAN START YOUR NEW LIFE HERE.
* 2099 UNLIMITED #2 -- ME AGAIN
WHAT LIFE? SINGING FOLK SONGS IN CAFES?
HEY, IF I WANTED MY LIFE QUIET, I WOULDN'TVE RECORDED SONGS THAT EXPOSED THE CROOKS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT BIZ AND GOT ME ON THEIR HIT LIST, Y'KNOW?
IF I STICK WITH YOU, AT LEAST I'LL GET MATERIAL TO SING ABOUT!
NO!
NOBODY STICKS WITH ME. I'M ALONE.
AND I HAVE TO STAY ALONE -- OR I'LL HAVE MORE DEATHS ON MY CONSCIENCE.
LOOK, IF I CHOOSE TO --
SHUT UP. THAT ROAR...
SI-GURD SI-GURD SI-GURD
SI-GURD SI-GURD SI-GURD
THE FALSE RAGNAROK WAS A HARBINGER OF THE TRUE! HERE IS OUR PROOF, OH BROTHERS IN THOR!
HERE IS SIGURD, THE GREAT BEAST FORETOLD OF IN ASGARDIAN LEGEND!
I AM NO BEAST! I AM A MAN!
THE PERFECT MAN!

HE'S KILLING THEM -- BUT THEY KEEP RUNNING TOWARD HIM!
SOMETIMES I'M GLAD I'M NOT RELIGIOUS.
BUT I AM A MAN...
JOHN!
AND A MAN...
DOES HIS JOB.
RRRRRRRR
RRRAAARRRR
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S A JOB THAT CAN ONLY BE DONE...
...BY THE HULK!

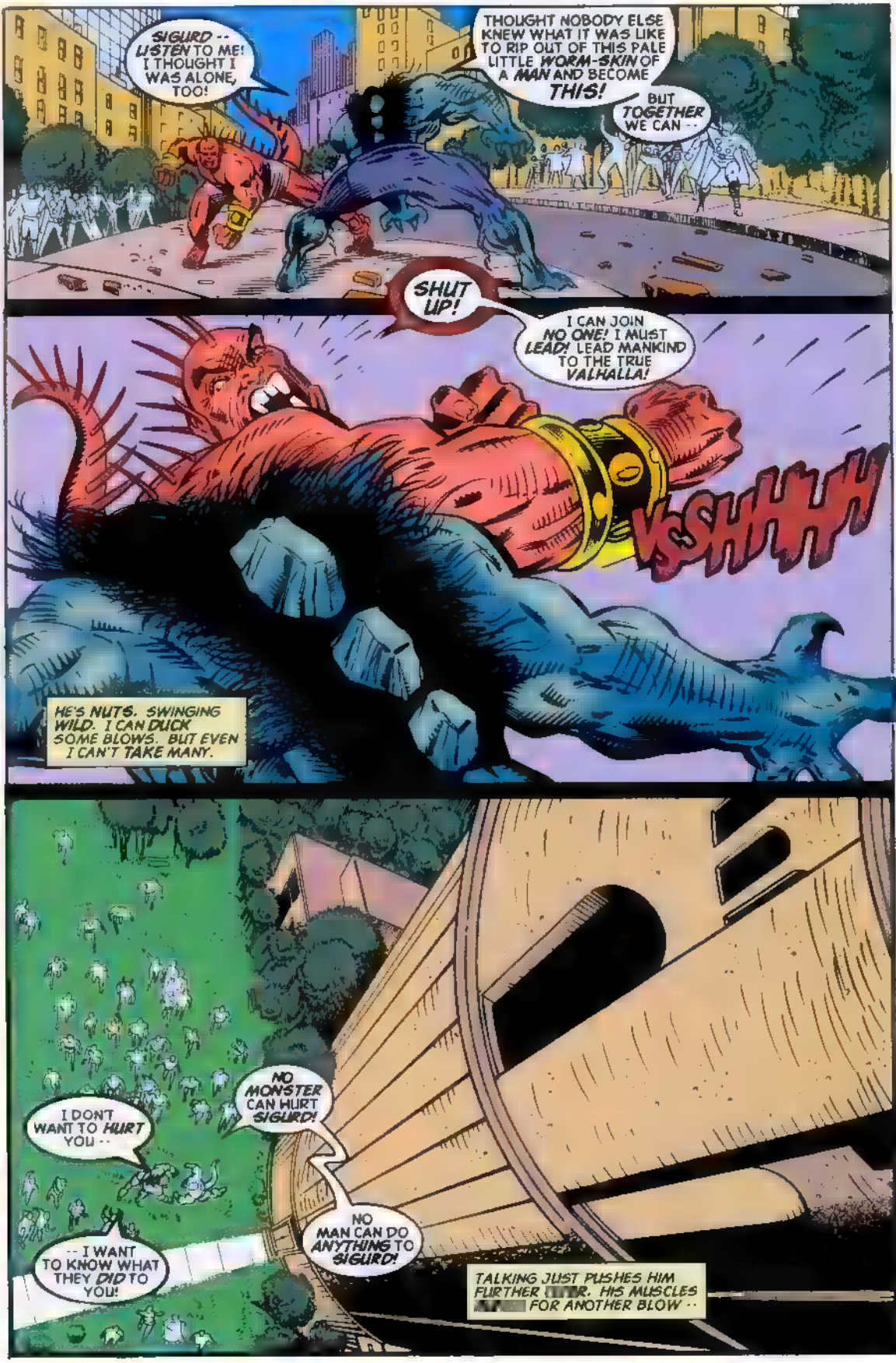
MY FEET HAVE PLOWED THROUGH GRANITE BUILDINGS, BUT THEY DON'T FAZE HIM.
IS IT JUST THE MUSCLES -- OR SOMETHING ELSE?
TOOM!
WHO...ARE YOU, MONSTER?!
THAT MEDALLION --
-- HIS POWER-SOURCE?
FLANG!
NO ONE ATTACKS THE PERFECT MAN!
I GUESS NOT.
I AM SIGURD!
THE NEXT STEP IN HUMAN EVOLUTION! DO YOU THINK A BEAST LIKE YOU CAN HURT ME?
BUDDY, I DON'T THINK WE'RE AS DIFFERENT AS YOU WANT TO BELIEVE.
SUDDENLY I KNOW HOW I CAN GET THROUGH TO HIM...

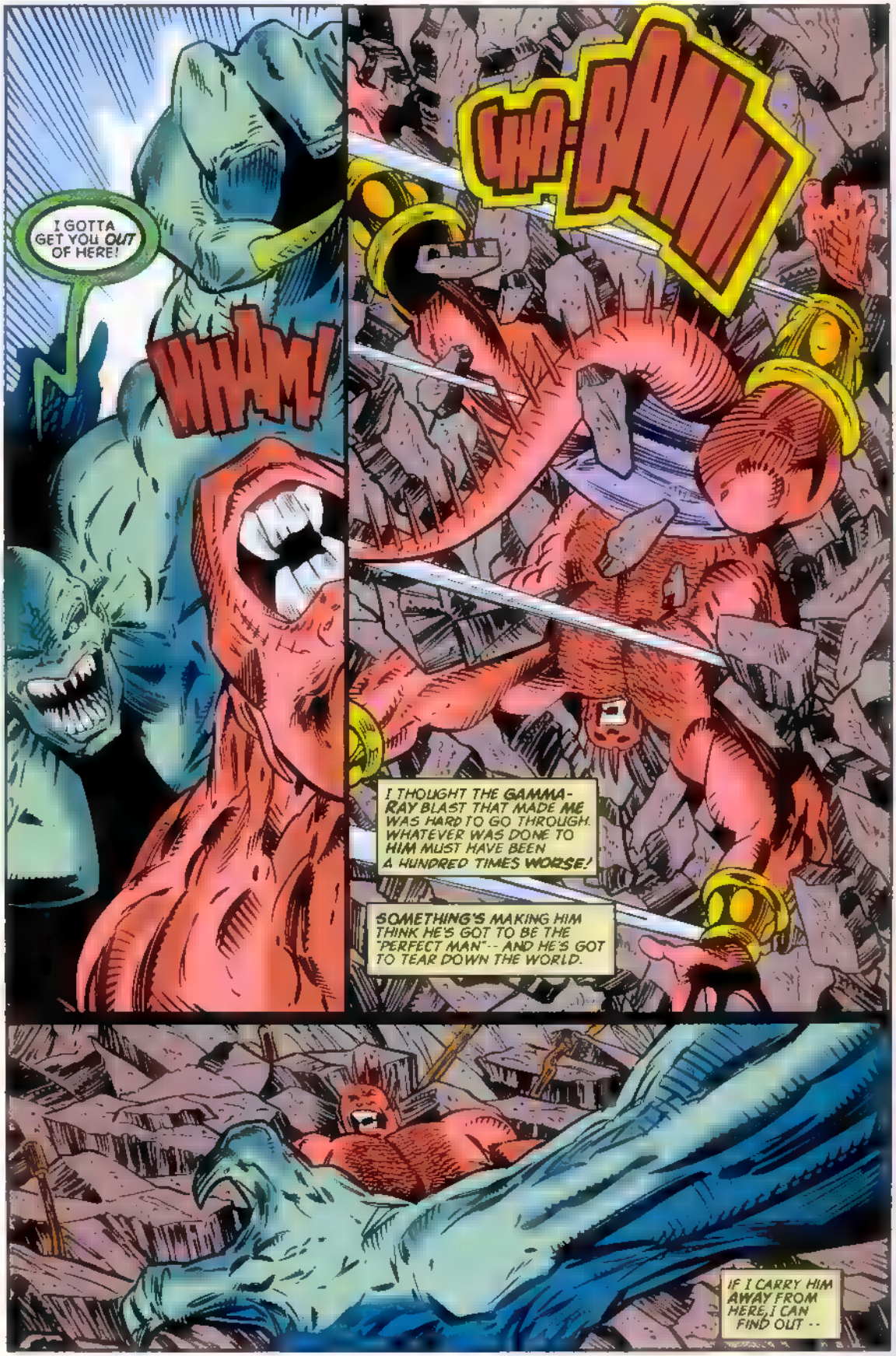
TO SIGURD THE MAN-GOG, HARBINGER OF RAGNAROK!
HURL YOURSELF INTO HIS WRATH! LET DEATH AT HIS HANDS BEAR YOU TO VALHALLA!
...BUT I DON'T GET THE CHANCE.
DO WHAT?!
I NEVER HEARD ABOUT THAT PART OF THIS RELIGION!
I THINK IT'S TIME FOR REFORM THORISM!
NO! THE PRIEST IS RIGHT!
FOR THOR! FOR ASGARD! STIR THE WRATH OF THE BEAST!
I AM NO BEAST!
UNLEASH THE FRENZY THAT WILL SHATTER THIS CORRUPT WORLD!
STOP!

BWOOM
KRA TAKKA TAKKA VAKKA TAM!
SI-GURD SI-GURD SI-GURD
I AM A MAN!
SLAMM

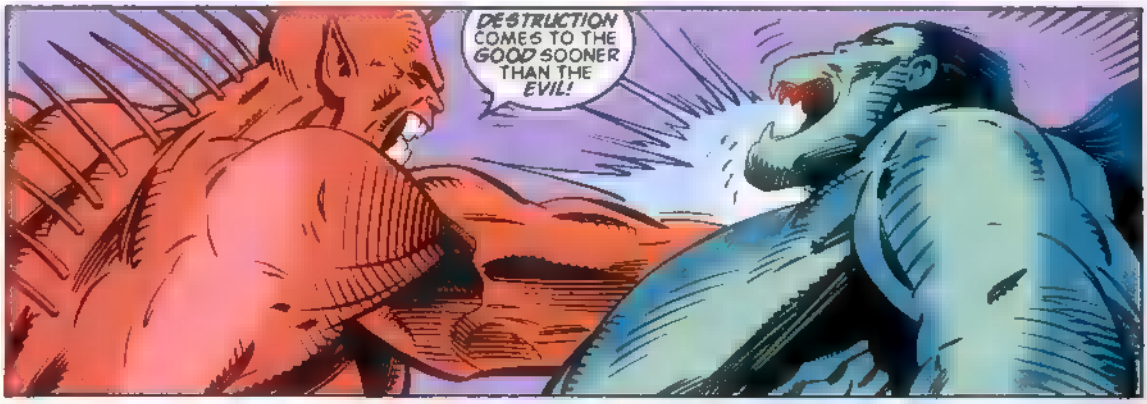

"A MAN," HE SAYS. A MAN DOESN'T TAKE HIS RAGE OUT ON THE HELPLESS.
I SHOULD TEAR HIS UGLY HEAD OFF --
-- BUT I CAN'T.
BECAUSE HE'S ME.
AND I'VE GOTTA MAKE [redacted] IT.
THOK
SAY, SIGURD -- HOW ABOUT WE TALK?
SKRASHH
YOU WERE A MAN, WEREN'T YOU? UNTIL SOMEBODY PUT YOU THROUGH AN EXPERIMENT!
NOW YOU'RE AFRAID OF WHAT YOU'VE BECOME -- AND YOU THINK YOU'RE ALONE!
WELL, THERE'S ONE OTHER --
I AM AFRAID OF NOTHING! I AM SIGURD! I AM THE PERFECT MAN!
KRAK

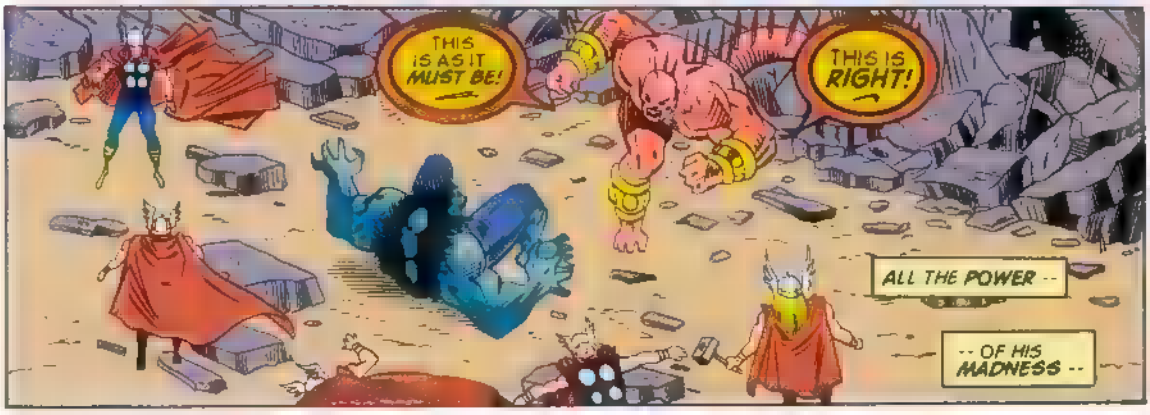
LOOKS LIKE THE SHOW'S MOVING UPTOWN.
EVERY TIME THEY HIT EACH OTHER, IT'S GOOD FOR ABOUT FIFTY Y[redacted]S.
WELL, I'M NOT JUST GONNA SIT UP HERE AND WATCH THEM DISAPPEAR INTO THE SUNSET...
...AND I'M NOT GONNA RUN TOWARD CERTAIN DEATH LIKE THE LEMMING PATROL HERE!
HEY. CALL ME A REBEL.
THE GREAT GREEN UGLY DIDN'T SEE MUCH USE FOR THIS MEDALLION, BUT I LEARNED IN THAT ROBOTIC DEPARTMENT STORE...
...THAT WHEN YOU START POKING INTO PEOPLE'S SECRETS...
...YOU MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.
YES!
ANYWAY, I ALWAYS DID LIKE THE BIG ACCESSORY LOOK.


SIGURD -- LISTEN TO ME! I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE, TOO!
THOUGHT NOBODY ELSE KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO RIP OUT OF THIS PALE LITTLE WORM-SKIN OF A MAN AND BECOME THIS!
BUT TOGETHER WE CAN --
SHUT UP!
I CAN JOIN NO ONE! I MUST LEAD! LEAD MANKIND TO THE TRUE VALHALLA!
VSSHHHH
HE'S NUTS. SWINGING WILD. I CAN DUCK SOME BLOWS. BUT EVEN I CAN'T TAKE MANY.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU --
NO MONSTER CAN HURT SIGURD!
-- I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEY DID TO YOU!
NO MAN CAN DO ANYTHING TO SIGURD!
TALKING JUST PUSHES HIM FURTHER BACK. HIS MUSCLES [illegible] FOR ANOTHER BLOW --


I GOTTA GET YOU OUT OF HERE!
WHAM!
KA-BAM!
I THOUGHT THE GAMMA-RAY BLAST THAT MADE ME WAS HARD TO GO THROUGH. WHATEVER WAS DONE TO HIM MUST HAVE BEEN A HUNDRED TIMES WORSE!
SOMETHING'S MAKING HIM THINK HE'S GOT TO BE THE "PERFECT MAN"-- AND HE'S GOT TO TEAR DOWN THE WORLD.
IF I CARRY HIM AWAY FROM HERE, I CAN FIND OUT --

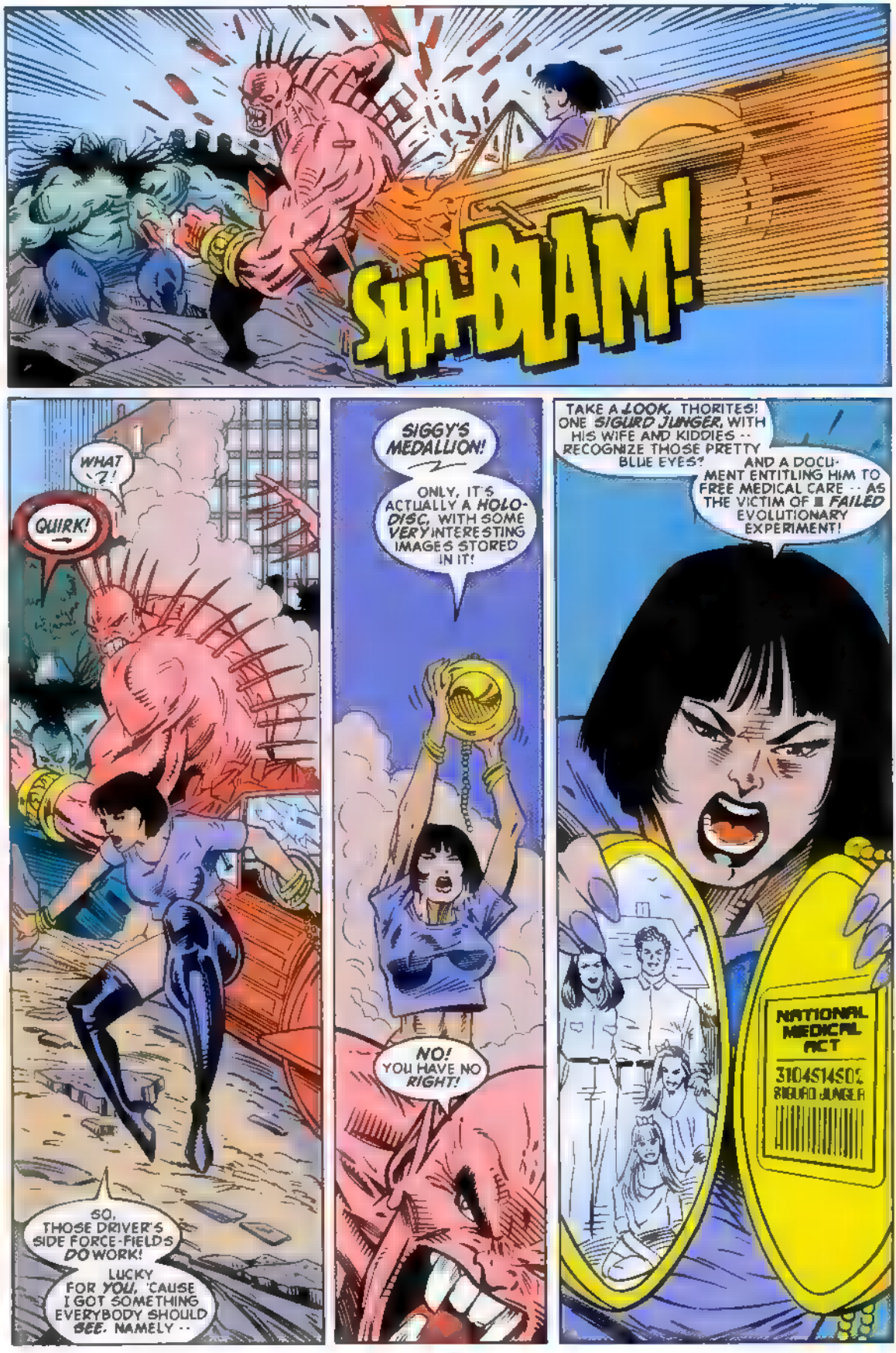
CHILDREN OF THOR! DON'T LET HIM STEAL YOUR PARENTS' SALVATION!
YEEEEEEEEEEE
PROTECT SIGURD WITH YOUR LIVES!
NO! GET AWAY!
LET HIM GO! MY DADDY WON'T GO TO VALHALLA IF YOU TAKE HIM!
YOUR DADDY'S GOING STRAIGHT TO VALHALLA WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON HIM!
NOW GET DOWN BEFORE YOUR INNOCENT LITTLE BUTTS GET--
AAAAAA
WOK
RAGNAROK COMES TO THE GUILTY AND THE INNOCENT ALIKE!


DESTRUCTION COMES TO THE GOOD SOONER THAN THE EVIL!


THIS IS AS IT MUST BE!
THIS IS RIGHT!
ALL THE POWER --
-- OF HIS MADNESS --

-- STRAIGHT INTO MY SKULL!
FWA-BOKK!
CAN'T SEE HIM -- JUST BLACK -- AND PAIN --

--- AND HIS RAGGED BREATH AS HE COMES FOR THE KILL --
-- AND A ROAR -- GETTING LOUDER --
HURRRRR


SHA-BLAM!
WHAT -?!
QUIRK!
SO, THOSE DRIVER'S SIDE FORCE-FIELDS DO WORK!
LUCKY FOR YOU, 'CAUSE I GOT SOMETHING EVERYBODY SHOULD SEE. NAMELY --
SIGGY'S MEDALLION!
ONLY, IT'S ACTUALLY A HOLO-DISC, WITH SOME VERY INTERESTING IMAGES STORED IN IT!
NO! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!
TAKE A LOOK, THORITES! ONE SIGURD JUNGER, WITH HIS WIFE AND KIDDIES -- RECOGNIZE THOSE PRETTY BLUE EYES?
AND A DOCU-MENT ENTITLING HIM TO FREE MEDICAL CARE -- AS THE VICTIM OF A FAILED EVOLUTIONARY EXPERIMENT!
NATIONAL MEDICAL ACT
3104514501
SIGURD JUNGER

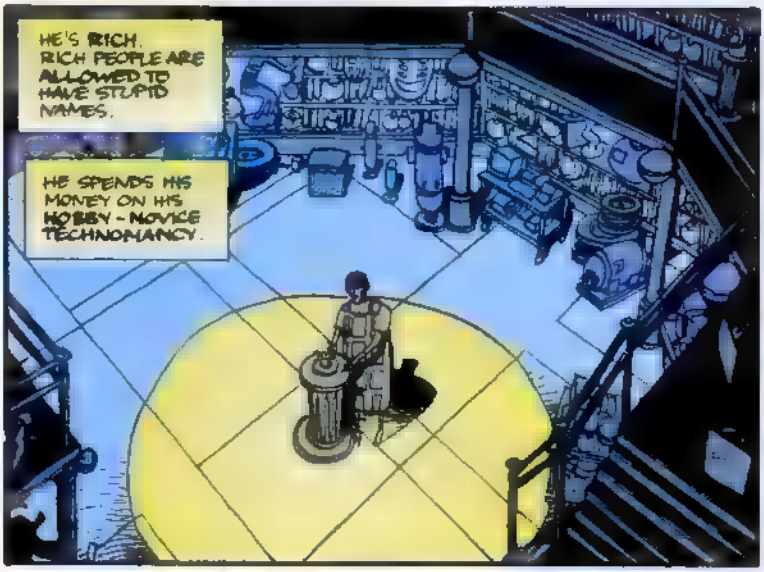
NO! I AM NO FAILURE!
THEY WANT YOU TO BELIEVE THAT! THE CROOKED GENETICISTS WHO TRIED TO SELL ME TO ALCHEMAX FOR THEIR FALSE VALHALLA!
BUT I AM THE PERFECT MAN! THE GODS WORKED THROUGH THE EXPERIMENT TO MAKE ME WHAT I AM!
I AM [redacted] FAILURE! I DID NOT SUFFER THIS CHANGE FOR NOTHING! AND IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE ME --
-- I WILL KILL YOU ALL!
NO, YOU WON'T.
STILL SHAKY. STILL CAN'T SEE MUCH.
-- BUT HE'S A BIG TARGET.
TIME YOU FACED SOME THINGS, SIGURD. YOU'RE AN ACCIDENT -- JUST LIKE ME!
WHAM

NO! I DIDN'T LOSE MY HUMANITY -- LOSE MY FAMILY -- [illegible] AN ACCI--
KSSH
THOK
PIECES OF HIS BODY ARE FLYING OFF. THE EXPERIMENT IS BREAKING DOWN MORE THAN HIS MIND.
I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM. I WANT HIM AROUND. I DON'T WANT TO BE THE ONLY ONE.
HE'S NOT GIVING ME THE CHANCE.
NOT FOR NOTHING! NOT FOR NOTHING!
WHOOSH
I CAN'T LIVE WITH THAT!
AND I CAN'T LET HIM BEAT ME.
I CAN'T LET HIM GET TO THE OTHERS.
THUD
THUDOOM
TO THE HELPLESS.

YOU SEE?!
OR DO YOU THINK THE REAL HARBINGER OF RAGNAROK WOULD CRUMBLE LIKE OLD CHEESE?
WE... HAVE BEEN TRICKED AGAIN?
CURSE THIS WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY [redacted] MANIPULATIONS! TODAY EVEN THE MIRACLES ARE LIES TO MAKE US OBEY... [redacted] TO MAKE US BUY!
SOMEDAY, SOMEDAY, RAGNAROK WILL COME...BUT A JADED, DECEIVED MANKIND MAY NOT RECOGNIZE IT!
HEY -- THAT'S WHY I KEEP WRITING SONGS. YOU GOTTA MAKE PEOPLE OPEN THEIR EYES. [redacted] --
RRRGH
HULK -- ?!
HE'S DEAD.
WELL... DON'T YOU THINK... MAYBE THAT'S FOR THE BEST?
YEAH.
RIGHT. FOR THE BEST.

YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, DID YOU? WHY DID YOU?
AFTER I LET THE KNIGHTS OF THE BANNER BE KILLED AND GAWAIN BE TAKEN -- I MADE A CHOICE.
I HAVE TO KEEP MAKING THAT CHOICE EVERY DAY -- OR I'M RIGHT [redacted] TO BEING THE [redacted] I WAS.
EVEN IF I'VE ALWAYS GOTTA MAKE IT ALONE.
"ALONE," HUH?
DIDN'T YOU NOTICE THAT [redacted] THE [redacted] WHO TIPPED THE BALANCE IN THIS FIGHT?
AND I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND THE SECRET LAB IN THE MALL?
THANKS. GO WRITE A [redacted] ABOUT IT -- IN YOUR [redacted] PLACE.
MY NEW...?
YOU'RE NOT GETTING IT, ARE YOU? LIKE MAYBE YOU NEED SOMEBODY TO DO YOUR POKING AROUND?
LIKE MAYBE YOU NEED SOMEBODY TO TALK TO?
I DO FINE... WITHOUT TALKING.
NOW SHUT IT. WE'VE GOT TO GET SOMEWHERE
TO WHERE? SOMEPLACE FOR DECAF, FOLK [redacted] AND YAWNS?
NO. TO THE GENETICS LAB.
I WANT TO SEE IF THERE'S ANY CONNECTION TO THE CREEPS I'M AFTER --
-- BEFORE WE GO BACK TO L.A.
END

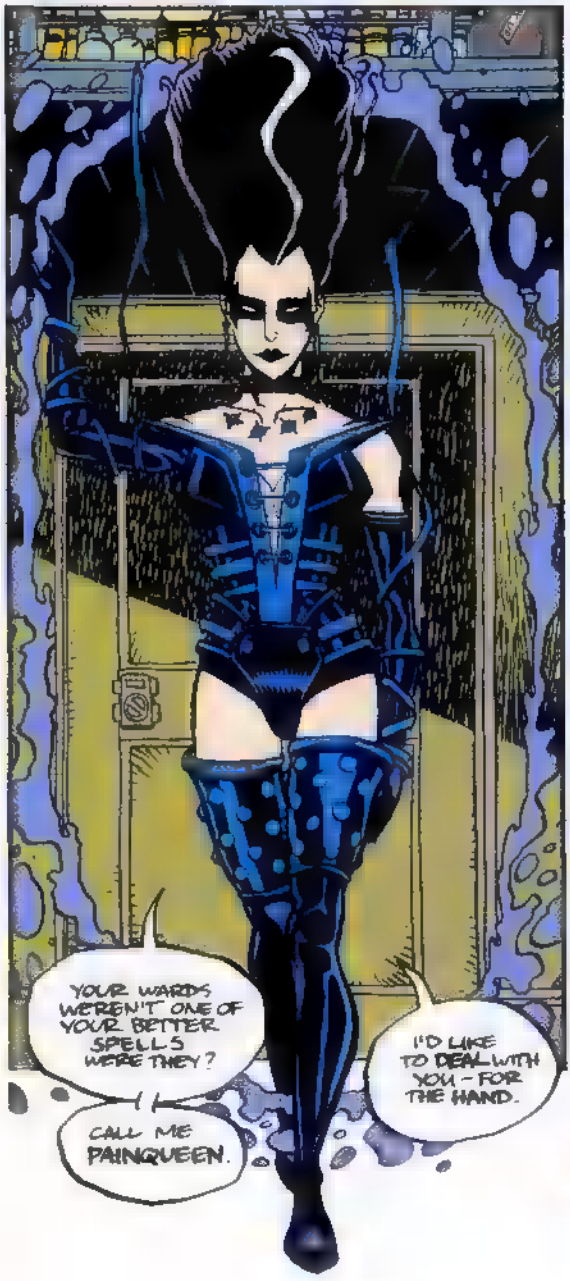
IN THE MAGIC BUSINESS, USING YOUR REAL NAME IS A USEFUL SHORTCUT TO THE GRAVE.
SO, TONIGHT, THE MAN INSIDE THIS HOLLYWOOD HILLS CAR-BUNCLE CALLS HIMSELF "DOCTOR PYLON."
DON'T LAUGH


HE'S RICH. RICH PEOPLE ARE ALLOWED TO HAVE STUPID NAMES.
HE SPENDS HIS MONEY ON HIS HOBBY - NOVICE TECHNOMANCY.

PYLON HAS MONEY INSTEAD OF TALENT.
HIS OCCULTECH-NOLOGICAL SKILLS ARE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN RUDIMENTARY AND MISSING.

TONIGHT, PYLON'S RICHES HAVE BOUGHT HIM A PIECE OF MAGIC.
HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IT IS - JUST THAT IT HAS POWER.
PYLON STARES WITH IGNORANCE AT A HANDFUL OF HORROR...

IT'S BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?
OHHH!!
I-I-I-I'VE ERECTED PROTECTIVE WARDS!
YOU CAN'T GET ME!


YOUR WARDS WEREN'T ONE OF YOUR BETTER SPELLS WERE THEY?
I'D LIKE TO DEAL WITH YOU - FOR THE HAND.
CALL ME PAINQUEEN.

FEW MAGICIANS KNOW EACH OTHER, IT BEING SUCH AN UNDERGROUND THING.
A SHAME; PAINQUEEN BEING AN EXILED QUISLING FROM A PARALLEL WHERE A WAR WITH HELL WAS FOUGHT ON LAND...
...AND PYLON BEING BASICALLY NOT GOOD AT MAGIC.

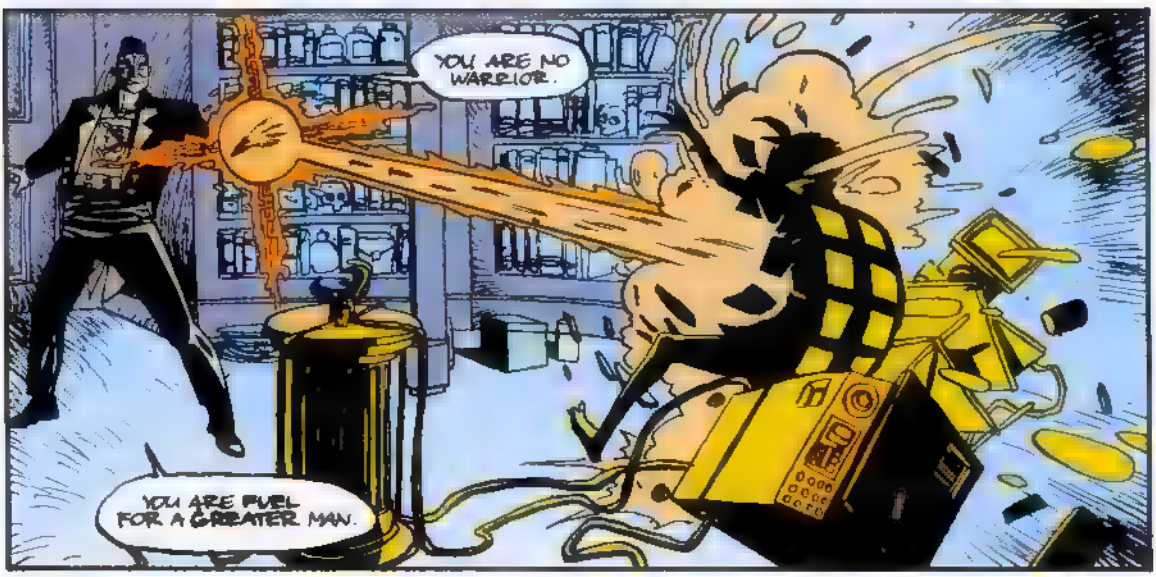
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU PYLON - BUT I NEED THE HAND.
I AM BUT A WEAK AND FEEBLE WOMAN, AND YOU, MIGHTY OCCULT WARRIOR...
...SURELY YOU HAVE NO NEED OF ITS POWER?

WELL, THAT'S...THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU.
YOU WOULDN'T REALLY HURT ME, WOULD YOU?
AS IF.
WELL, I NEED THE HAND FOR A WHILE ...BUT ONCE I'M DONE, IT'S YOURS.
PERHAPS YOU COULD COME BACK LATER TONIGHT... MAYBE HAVE A DRINK WITH ME?
Shockit! That lousy charm was supposed to work first time.
PAINQUEEN LEAVES, PROBABLY TO WASH HER GLOVE.
SHE [redacted] WHAT THE HAND IS - WHAT IT CALLS.
SO PYLON WIRES THE HAND UP TO COMPUTERS HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND, TO RECORD EVERYTHING ABOUT THE HAND.
IT'S HOURS BEFORE HE HEARS ANOTHER VOICE AGAIN.
THE WRONG VOICE.
YOU'RE PYLON?

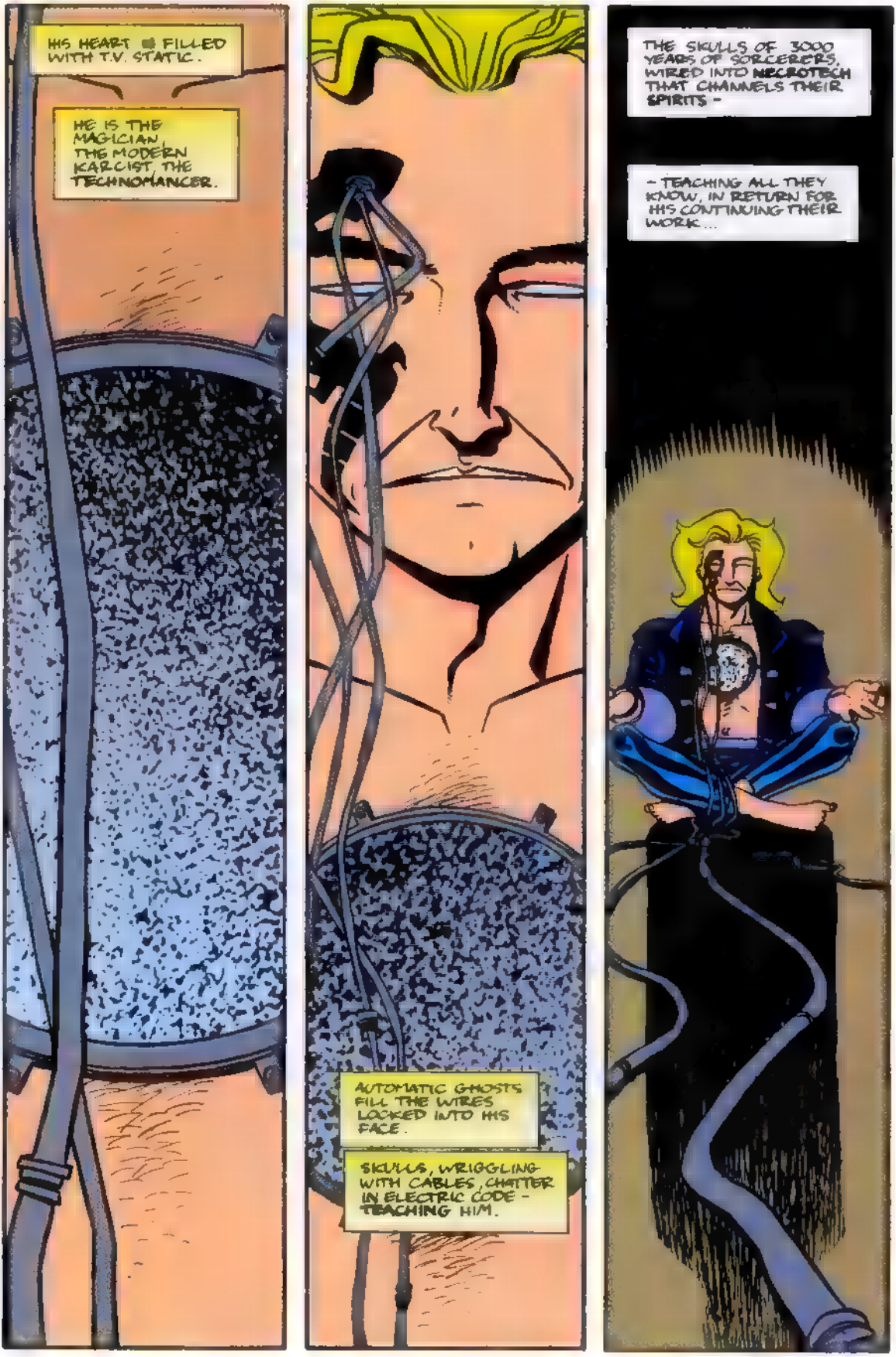
I AM NAMED NECROSIS.
I'M NOT HERE TO PRACTICE CHARMS OR WILES UPON YOU.
GIVE ME THE HAND OF TIAMAT OR I WILL BITE OUT YOUR LIFE.

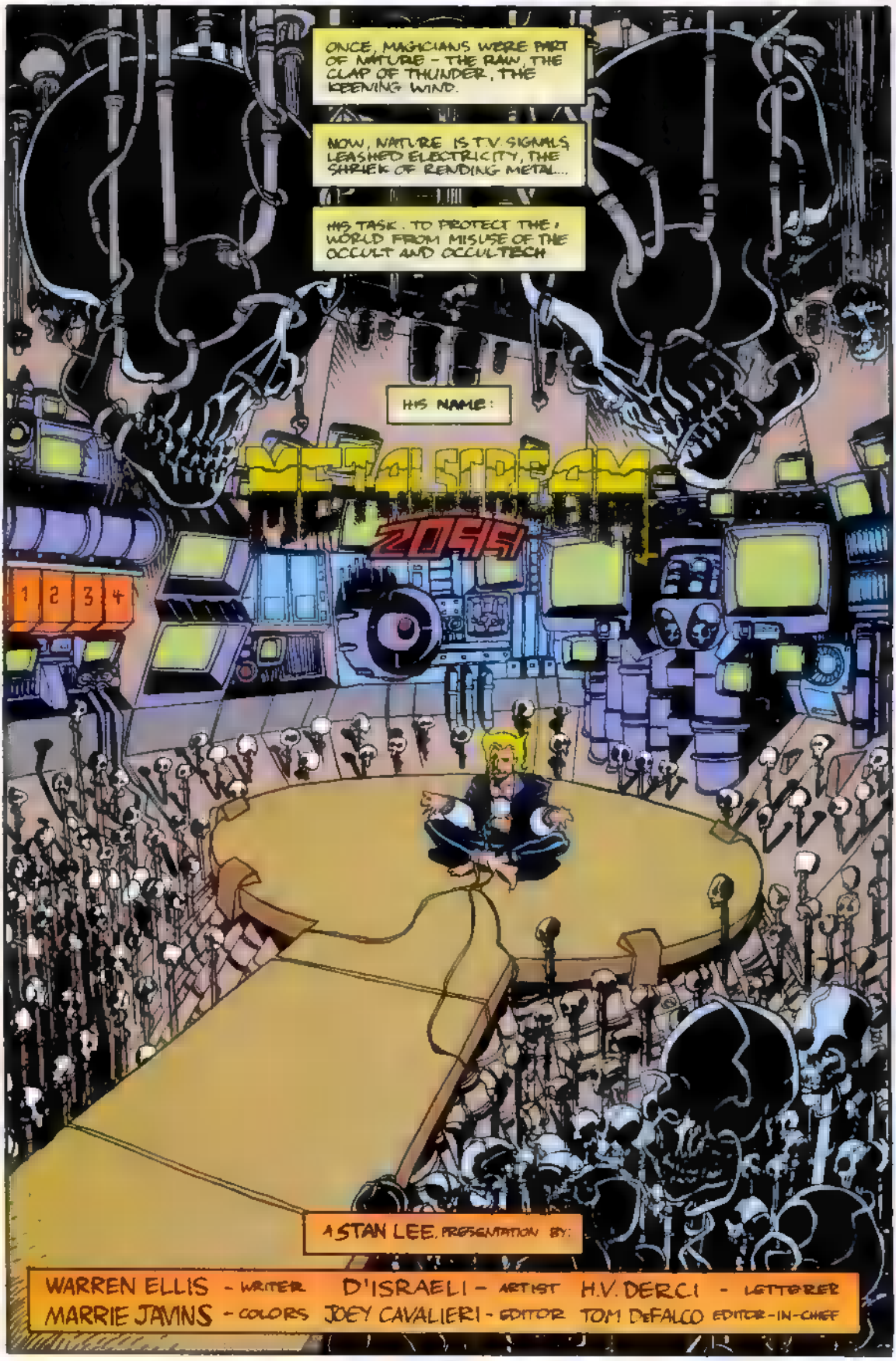
I'M A MIGHTY OCCULT WARRIOR -
THE PRETTY WOMAN SAID SO -

THE DEVICE IN MY CHEST IS CALLED THE SKIN CAGE.
IT INCREASES MY POWER EVERY TIME I COMMIT MURDER.


YOU ARE NO WARRIOR.
YOU ARE FUEL FOR A GREATER MAN.

WHY?
WHY ARE YOU KILLING ME? WHAT HAVE I DONE?
FFHH
BECAUSE I LOVE IT.
AND BECAUSE YOU'RE STUPID


HIS HEART IS FILLED WITH T.V. STATIC.
HE IS THE MAGICIAN, THE MODERN KABCIST, THE TECHNOMANCER.
AUTOMATIC GHOSTS FILL THE WIRES LOCKED INTO HIS FACE.
SKULLS, WRIGGLING WITH CABLES, CHATTER IN ELECTRIC CODE - TEACHING HIM.
THE SKULLS OF 3000 YEARS OF SORCERERS, WIRED INTO NECROTECH THAT CHANNELS THEIR SPIRITS -
- TEACHING ALL THEY KNOW, IN RETURN FOR HIS CONTINUING THEIR WORK...


ONCE, MAGICIANS WERE PART OF NATURE - THE RAW, THE CLAP OF THUNDER, THE KEENING WIND.
NOW, NATURE IS TV SIGNALS, LEASHED ELECTRICITY, THE SHRIEK OF RENDING METAL...
HIS TASK: TO PROTECT THE WORLD FROM MISUSE OF THE OCCULT AND OCCULTECH
HIS NAME:
METALSTORM
2099
1 2 3 4
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION BY:
WARREN ELLIS - WRITER
D'ISRAELI - ARTIST
H.V. DERCI - LETTERER
MARRIE JAVINS - COLORS
JOEY CAVALIERI - EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

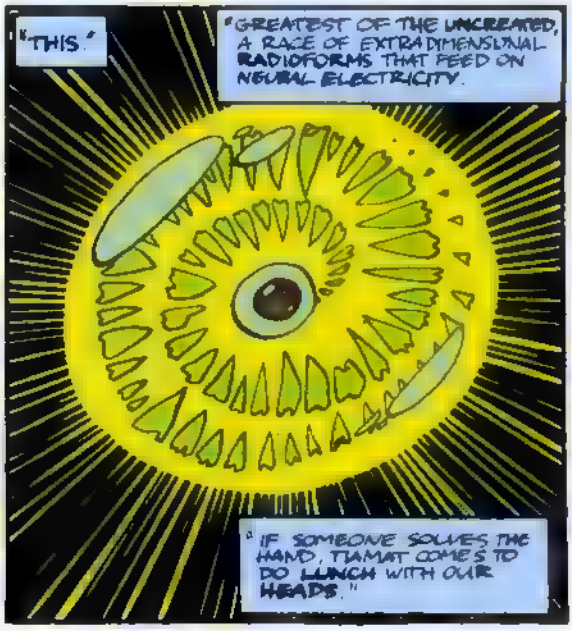
THIS IS WHERE WE ARE. THE MANTIC GALLERY -
-HIS CLOAKED HOUSE, RESTING IMPERCEPTIBLY IN THE ARIZONA DESERT.
AND THIS IS ME; LITANY KIRKPATRICK.
I S'POSE YOU COULD CALL ME THE LOYAL DISCIPLE.
HEY! ASHTRAY HEAD!
I TOLD YOU - YOU CAN CALL ME JOHN, OR METAL-SCREAM, OR PLEASE MASTER DON'T HIT ME.
HA HA REAL FUNNY. THE GALLERY'S WOKEN UP, BOSS.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?
NEXT TIME I TAKE A STUDENT, I'LL CHECK HER HEAD FOR ROCKS FIRST...

THE GALLERY - THE ROW OF LIVING FRAMES, DEPICTING MAGICAL EVENTS ANYWHERE IN OR OUTSIDE THE WORLD, THAT NEVER ENDS...
URGH. THAT IS SERIOUSLY VILE.

I THINK THAT'S THE HAND OF TIAMAT.
THOSE TATTOOS AND SPLINTERS FORM A CODE. BREAK THE CODE, YOU GET A MAGICAL EQUATION.

HEY, I'M ALL FOR FASHION SURGERY BUT WHO'D DO THAT TO THEIR OWN HAND?
AN 8TH CENTURY CELTIC MAGICIAN AND SHEEP-WORRIER CALLED SUHGURIM THE UNSTABLE.

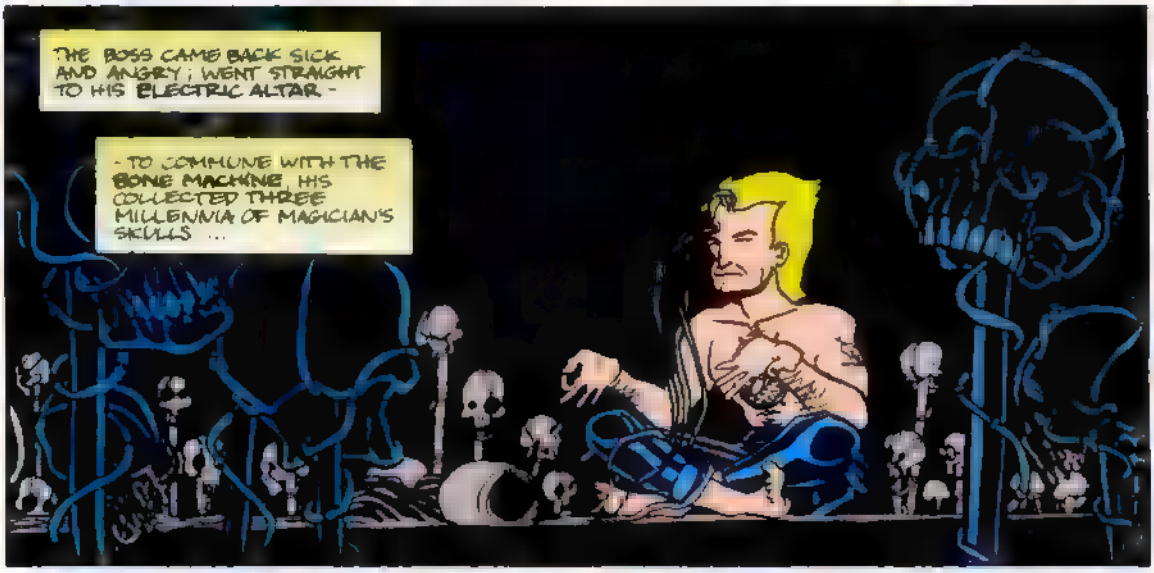
HE DID IT AFTER HIS FIFTH WIFE LEFT HIM. SOLVING THE EQUATION INVITES TIAMAT TO EAT THE WORLD, Y'SEE.
THE LOCAL CHURCHMEN CAUGHT HIM IN TIME AND BURNED HIM ALIVE...
AND WHAT'S A TIAMAT?


"THIS."
"GREATEST OF THE UNCREATED, A RACE OF EXTRADIMENSIONAL RADIOFORMS THAT FEED ON NEURAL ELECTRICITY.
"IF SOMEONE SOLVES THE HAND, TIAMAT COMES TO DO LUNCH WITH OUR HEADS."

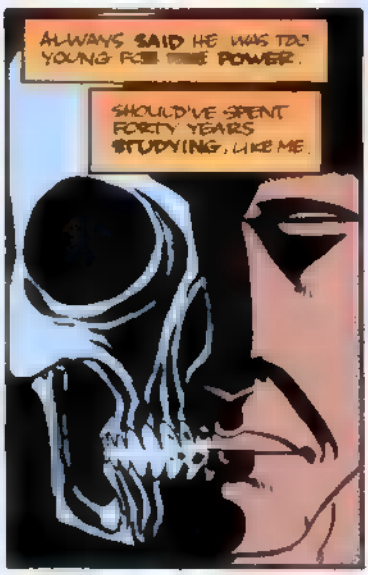
DOCTOR PYLON?
I CAME BACK FOR THAT DRINK AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT...
...LIKE... ...TO... ...DO...
NECROSIS.
GET OUT, WOMAN. GET OUT RIGHT NOW.
YEAH, RIGHT.
I HEARD OF PYLON; HE WAS A NOVICE, A NOTHING.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM, YOU VICIOUS SCREWHEAD.

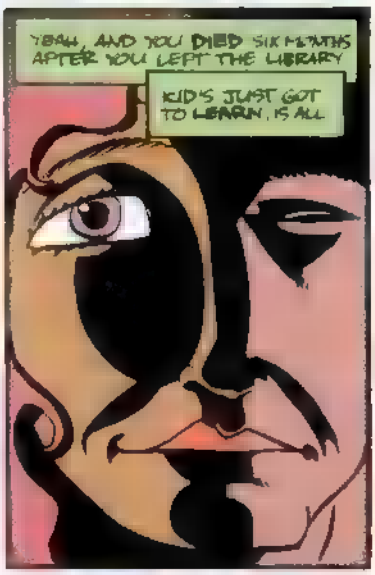
PYLON WAS AN IDIOT, NOT A VIOLENT MAN.
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, AM A VERY VIOLENT MAN.
BUT I DIDN'T -
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
MY NAME'S PAINQUEEN, AND I'VE DONE THINGS THAT'D STOP YOUR HEART-
- BUT I DIDN'T KILL HIM!

SO WHO DID?
I COME HERE FOR THE HAND, AND FIND YOU WITH HIS BODY -
THAT'S YOUR EVIDENCE?
SMELL THE AIR! RUN AN AURA TRACE, IF YOU'RE SUCH HOT STUFF -
OOWW!
YOU SEEM PRETTY SURE OF YOURSELF, OKAY...
...NECROSIS.
I'VE GOT FILES ON HIM. HE KILLED PYLON, TOOK THE HAND...
I'M SORRY. THE NAME'S METALSCREAM -
OH, DON'T WORRY. I'LL REMEMBER YOUR NAME.
ALL I WANTED WAS A WAY OFF THIS PLANE THE HAND WOULD HAVE HELPED.
WHAT I GOT WAS A CORPSE AND A BEATING.
BELIEVE ME - I'LL REMEMBER YOU.

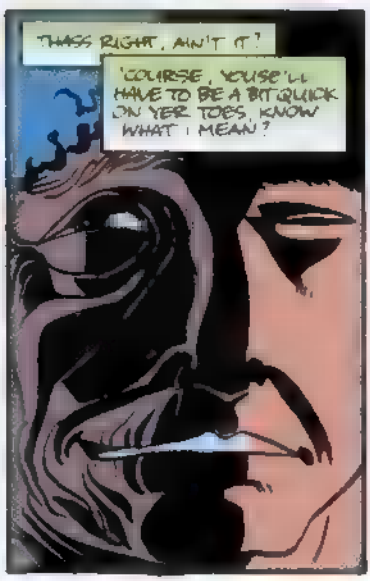

THE BOSS CAME BACK SICK AND ANGRY; WENT STRAIGHT TO HIS ELECTRIC ALTAR -
- TO COMMUNE WITH THE BONE MACHINE, HIS COLLECTED THREE MILLENNIA OF MAGICIAN'S SKULLS ...

I SCREWED UP
I ARRIVED TOO LATE AND NEARLY WASTED AN INNOCENT.


ALWAYS SAID HE WAS TOO YOUNG FOR THE POWER.
SHOULD'VE SPENT FORTY YEARS STUDYING, LIKE ME.


YEAH, AND YOU DIED SIX MONTHS AFTER YOU LEFT THE LIBRARY.
KID'S JUST GOT TO LEARN, IS ALL

RECRIMINATIONS, INSULTS AND SARCASM ARE NOT REQUIRED
TIAMAT MAY BE RELEASED UPON THE WORLD. THINK ON THAT!


THASS RIGHT, AIN'T IT?
'COURSE, YOUSE'LL HAVE TO BE A BIT QUICK ON YER TOES, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

WHAT'S EVERYONE LOOKING AT ME FOR? I WAS JUST DEPRESSED.
OKAY, OKAY: I'M GUNGUARIM. HERE'S WHAT YOU DO.

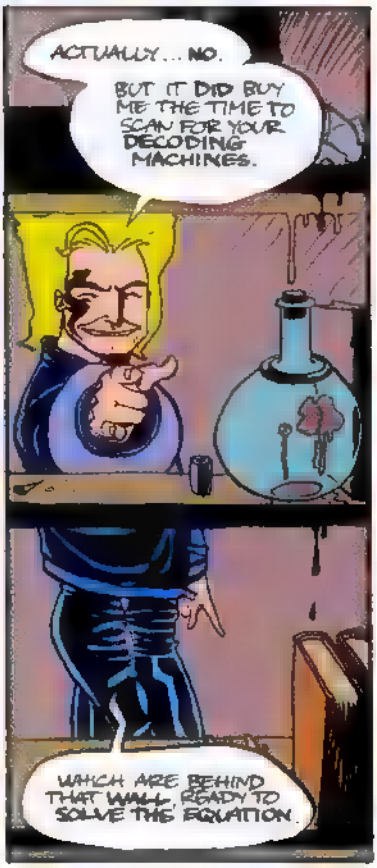
LITANY! HAVE THE FRAMES LOCATED NECROSIS?
eek
BEER
BEER
YES, AND LISTEN, UGLY, I'M SICK OF YOU APPEARING FROM NOWHERE AND -
SHUT UP AND GET READY - WE'RE OFF TO STOP TIAMAT FROM GNAWING ON YOUR BRAINS.
OH.
THAT'S OKAY, THEN.
NECROSIS' THING, UNSURPRISINGLY, IS [redacted]ATH.
DEATH IN INDUSTRIAL QUANTITIES.
POND'S FORGE
DUE TO THAT THING IN HIS CHEST, DEATH MAKES HIM STRONGER.

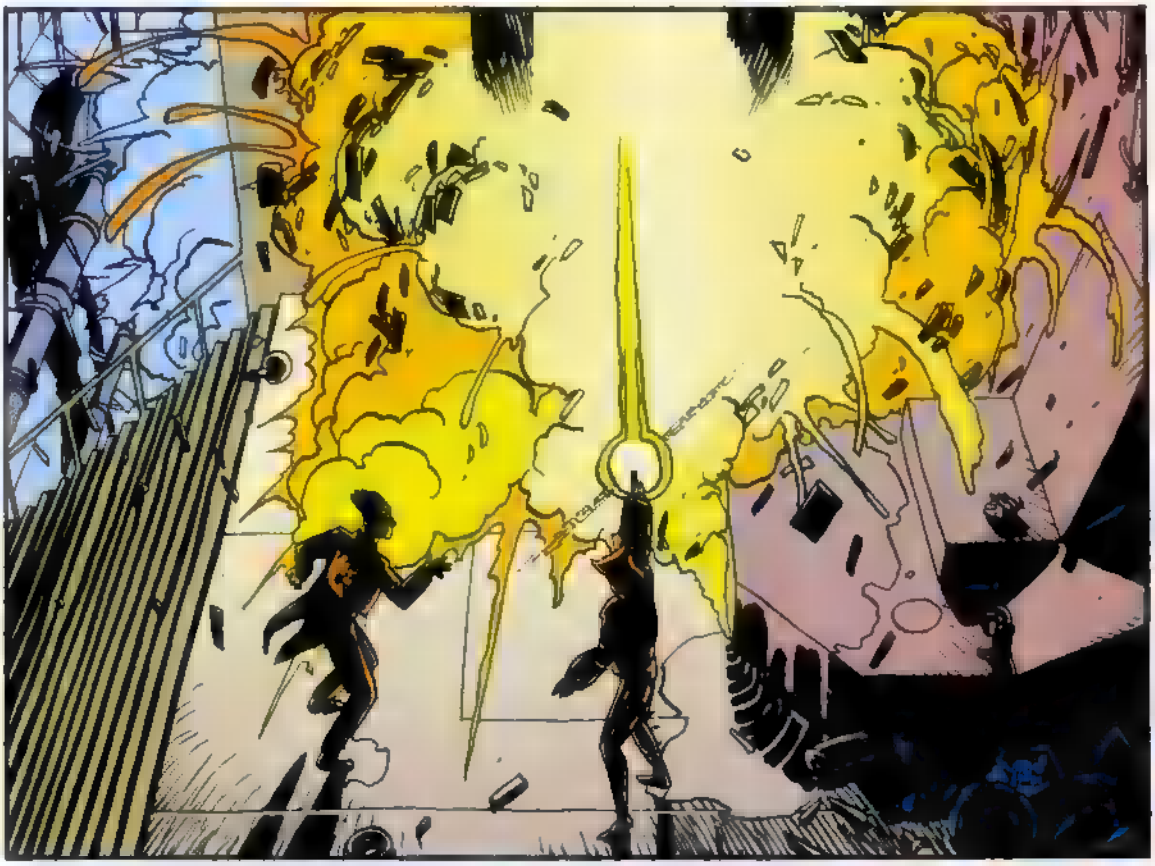
PRIVATE VOICE JOURNAL;
I HAVE SEEN OTHER PLANES, MAGICKAL DIMENSIONS ABOVE AND BEYOND THIS WET, TAWDRY PLACE -
- BUT I AM TIED HERE BY MY WEAKNESS.
FOR THE POWER NECESSARY TO ASCEND, I MUST COMMIT GENOCIDE.
MY MACHINES HAVE BROKEN THE HAND'S CODE, AND ARE SOLVING THE EQUATION AS I SPEAK.
IT IS MY ACT THAT BRINGS TIAMAT, AND SO EVERY MURDER IT COMMITS IS MINE.
MY POWER WILL BE INCALCULABLE.
EARTH WILL FEED A GREATER MAN -
- WHAT'S HAPPENING?
SOMETHING'S COMING -

NECROSIS!

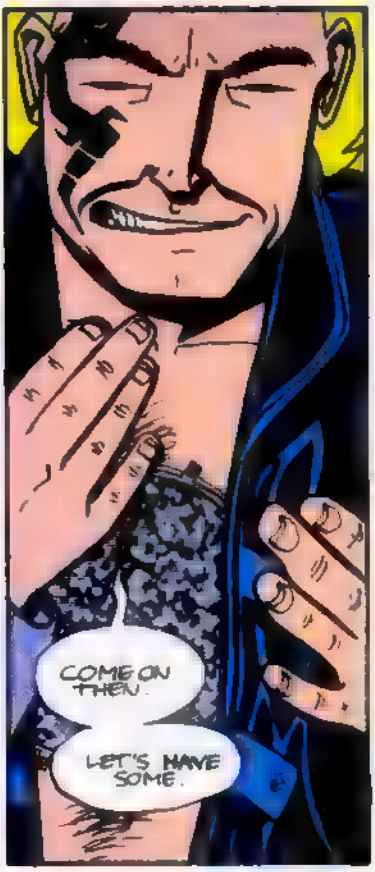
SHUT YOUR MACHINES DOWN - OR I'LL KILL YOU -
- AND THEN I'LL KILL TIAMAT ITSELF.

YOU, MAGICIAN, ARE AN ABSURD TECH-CRAZED TWENTYSOMETHING LOSER.
NOTHING CAN KILL TIAMAT.
Can it?


ACTUALLY... NO.
BUT IT DID BUY ME THE TIME TO SCAN FOR YOUR DECODING MACHINES.
WHICH ARE BEHIND THAT WALL, READY TO SOLVE THE EQUATION.

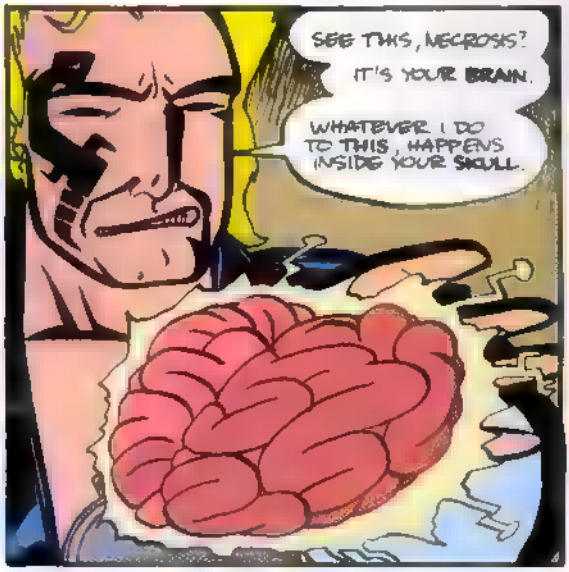


MY SINGLE CHANCE OF ASCENSION... ...MY ONLY...
YOU WILL DIE UGLY.

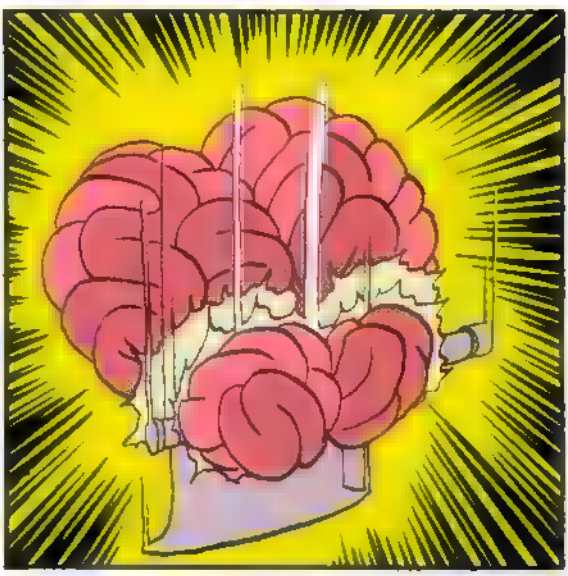

COME ON THEN.
LET'S HAVE SOME.

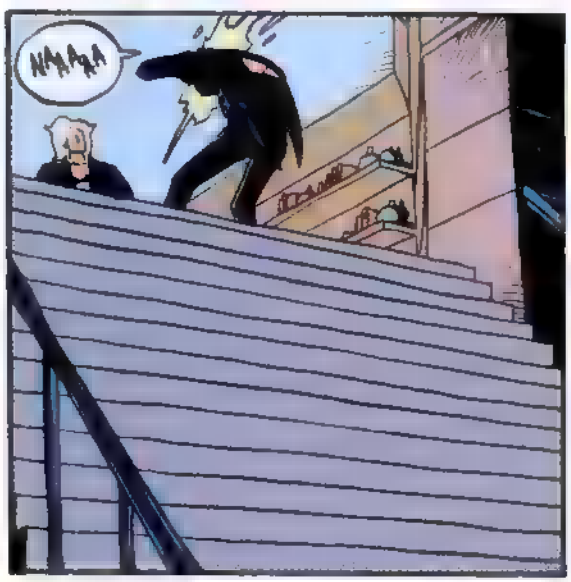
I HAVE STUDIED THE OCCULTECHNOLOGICAL FOR OVER FORTY YEARS.
I WILL LAY YOU WASTE.
I SHALL TASTE YOUR DEAD BRAIN AND LICK THE FEAR FROM YOUR COLD INNARDS.
HEY, FRANKENSTEIN!
YOU SPENT TOO MUCH TIME IN THE LIBRARY.
THE SKIN CAGE... ...MY POWER...
ALL GONE
Y'SEE, MAGIC IS A FINE WEAPON FOR AN OLD GUY LIKE YOU -
- UNLESS YOU GET SO ARROGANT WITH IT -
THAT YOU NEVER LEARN TO LOOK BEHIND YOU.

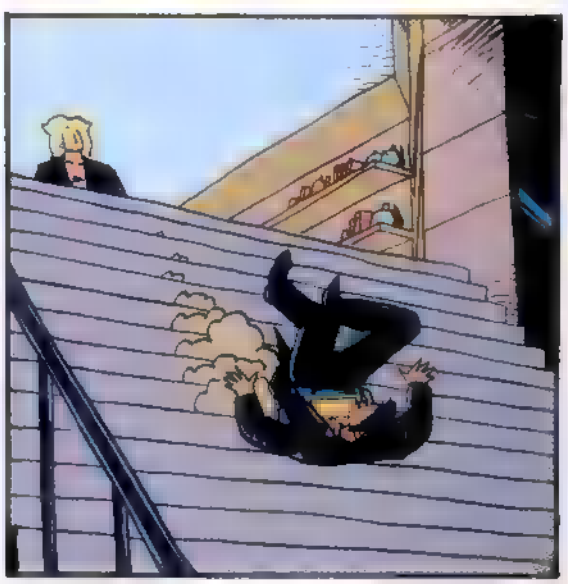
I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING HORRIBLE ENOUGH TO DO TO YOU.
DEATH ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH. TORTURE WOULD BE TOO QUICK.


SEE THIS, NECROSIS?
IT'S YOUR BRAIN.
WHATEVER I DO TO THIS, HAPPENS INSIDE YOUR SKULL.

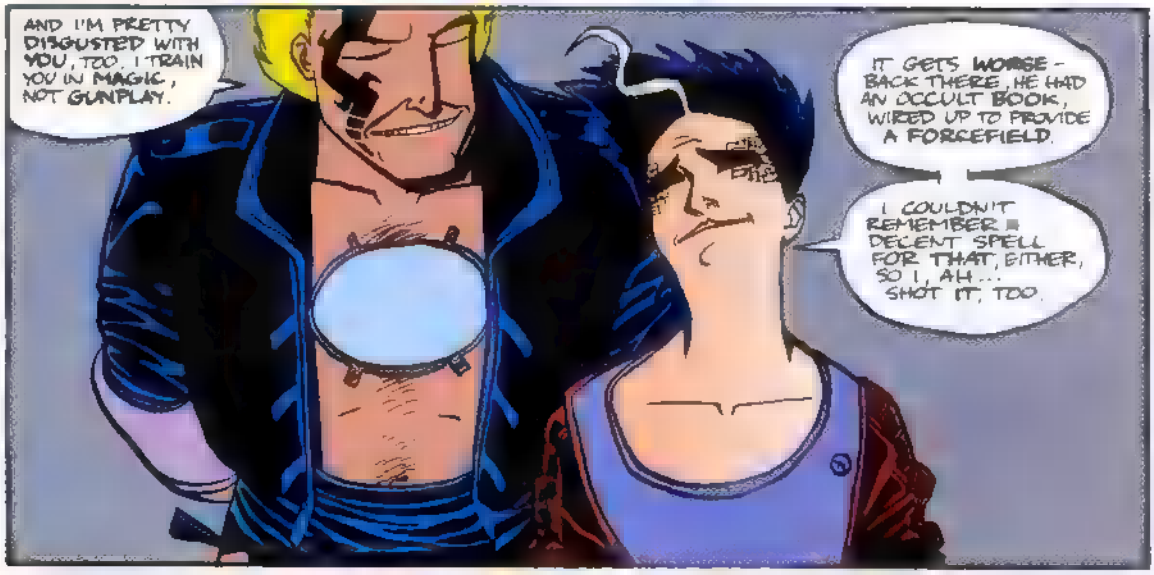
SEE THIS, NECROSIS?
no, no, please...

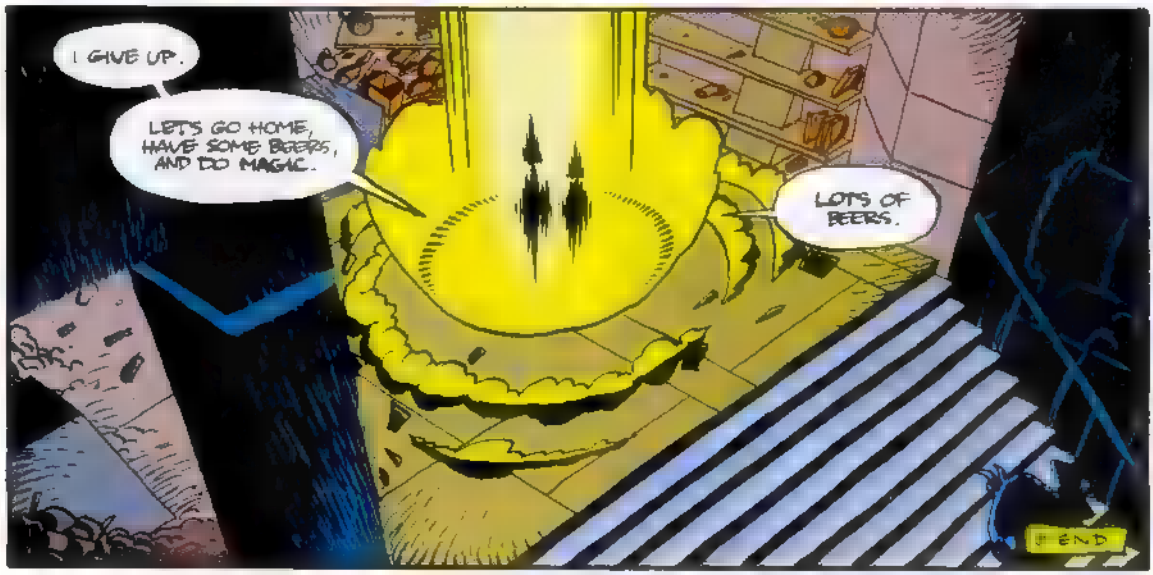


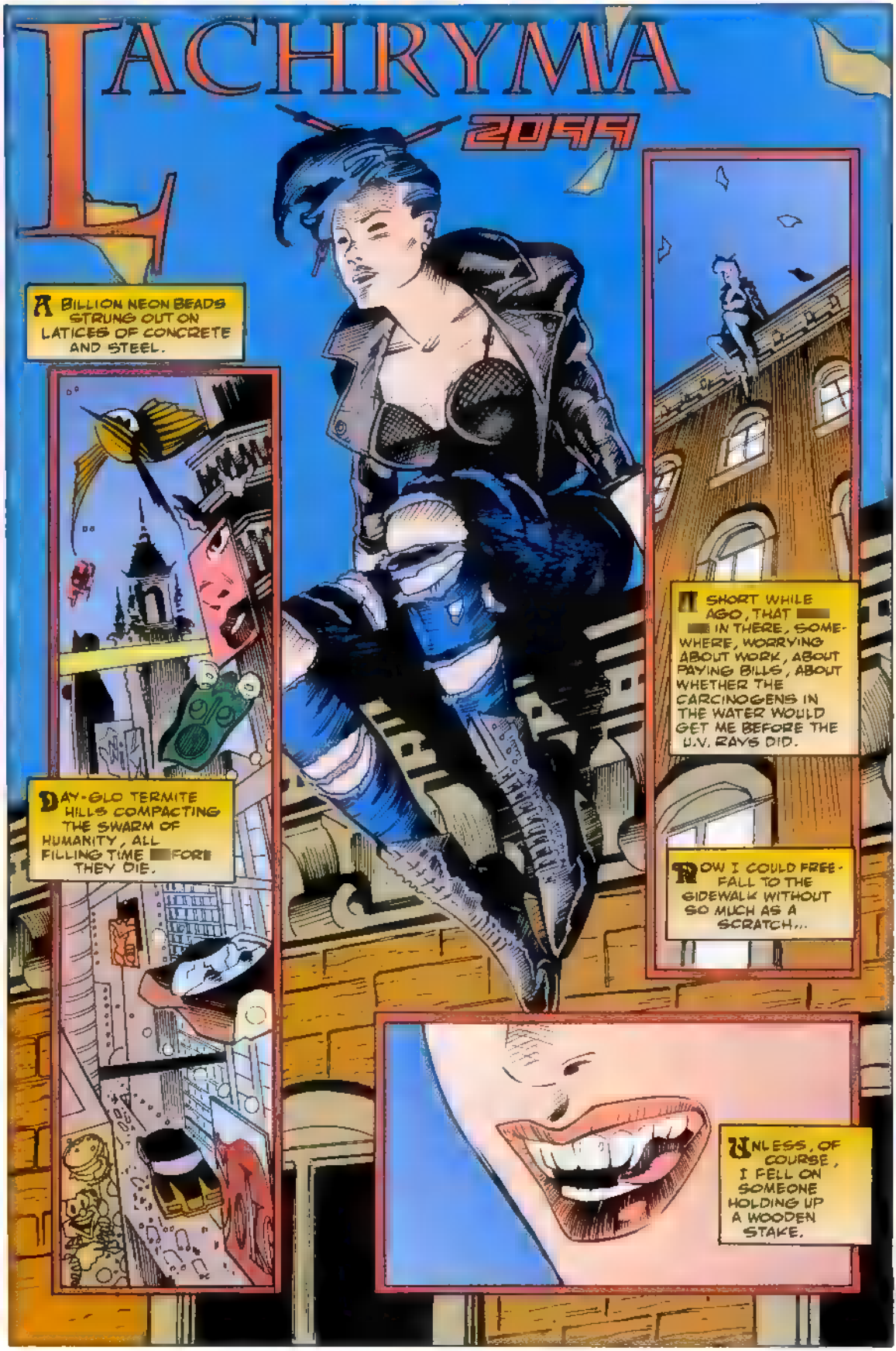

NAAAA

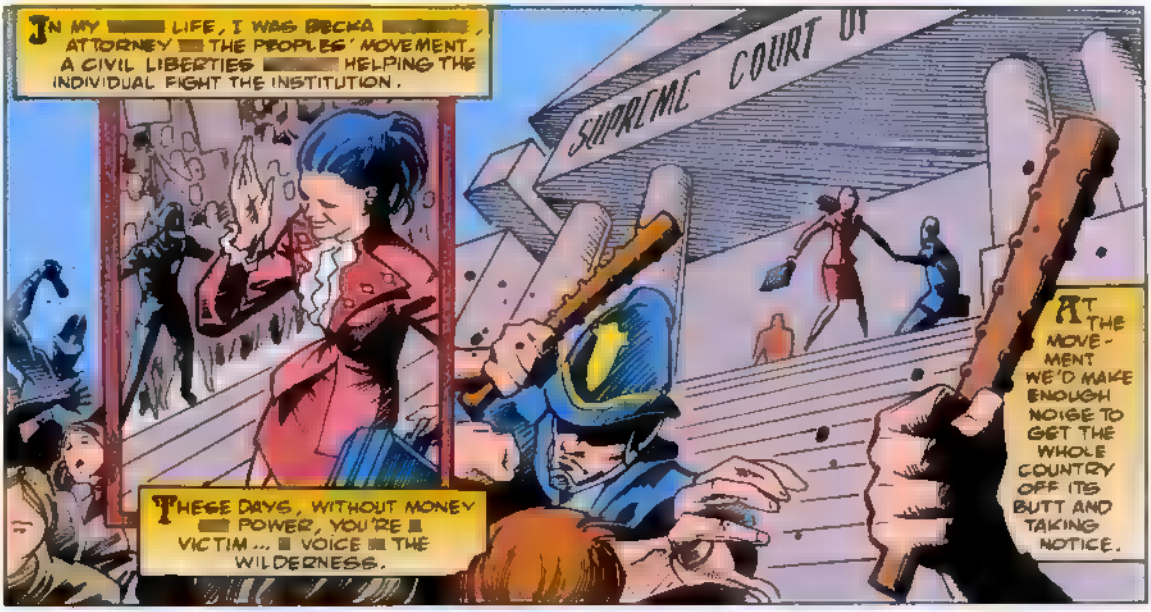


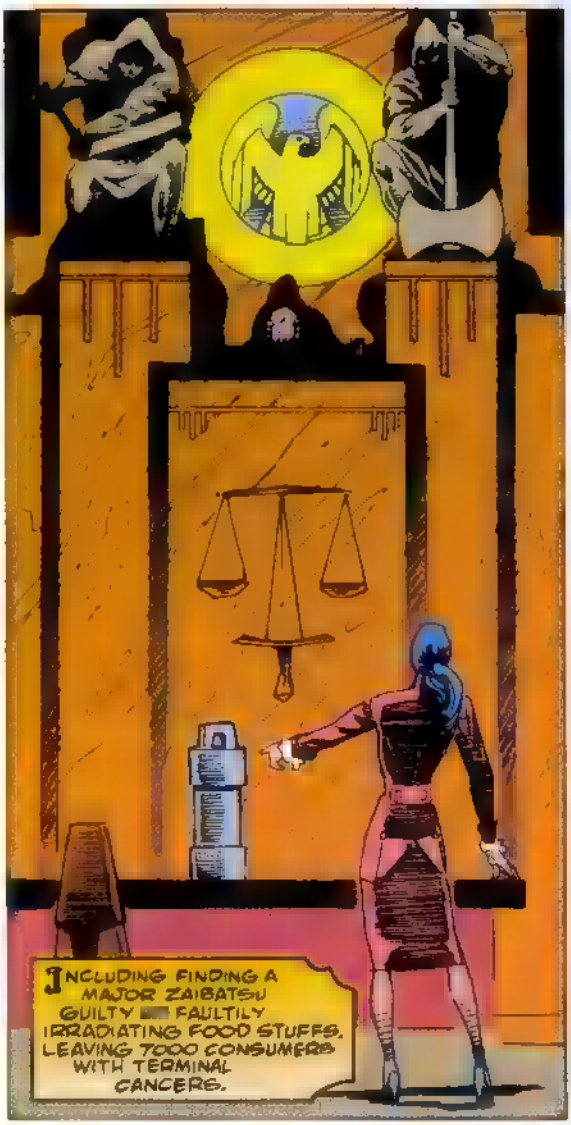
IS IT OVER? WHAT DID YOU DO?
I LOBOTOMIZED HIM.
FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, HE'LL REMEMBER MAGIC AND POWER - BUT HE'LL NEVER EVEN REGAIN THE COORDINATION TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

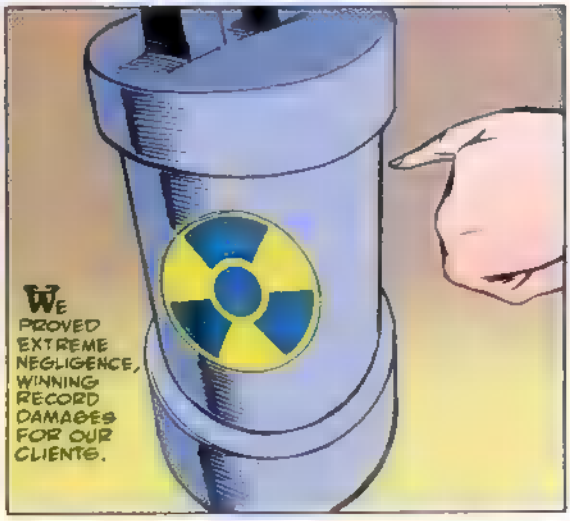

AND I'M PRETTY DISGUSTED WITH YOU, TOO. I TRAIN YOU IN MAGIC, NOT GUNPLAY.
IT GETS WORSE - BACK THERE, HE HAD AN OCCULT BOOK, WIRED UP TO PROVIDE A FORCEFIELD.
I COULDN'T REMEMBER A DECENT SPELL FOR THAT, EITHER, SO I, AH... SHOT IT, TOO.


I GIVE UP.
LET'S GO HOME, HAVE SOME BEERS, AND DO MAGIC.
LOTS OF BEERS.
THE END

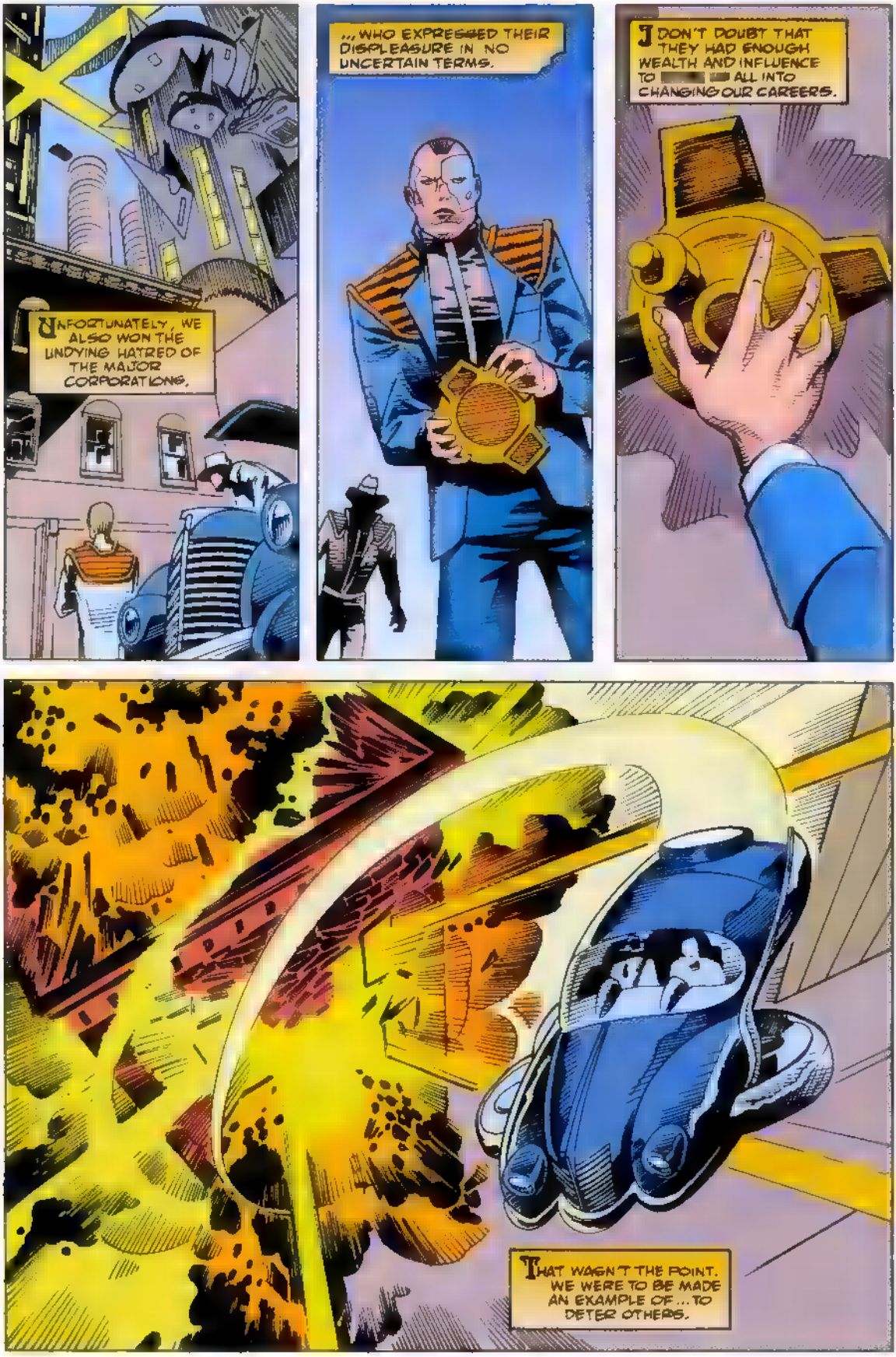

LACHRYMA
2099
A BILLION NEON BEADS STRUNG OUT ON LATICES OF CONCRETE AND STEEL.
DAY-GLO TERMITE HILLS COMPACTING THE SWARM OF HUMANITY, ALL FILLING TIME [redacted] FORE THEY DIE.
A SHORT WHILE AGO, THAT [redacted] IN THERE, SOMEWHERE, WORRYING ABOUT WORK, ABOUT PAYING BILLS, ABOUT WHETHER THE CARCINOGENS IN THE WATER WOULD GET ME BEFORE THE U.V. RAYS DID.
NOW I COULD FREE-FALL TO THE SIDEWALK WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A SCRATCH...
UNLESS, OF COURSE, I FELL ON SOMEONE HOLDING UP A WOODEN STAKE.


IN MY [redacted] LIFE, I WAS BECKA [redacted], ATTORNEY [redacted] THE PEOPLES' MOVEMENT. A CIVIL LIBERTIES [redacted] HELPING THE INDIVIDUAL FIGHT THE INSTITUTION.
SUPREME COURT OF
THESE DAYS, WITHOUT MONEY [redacted] POWER, YOU'RE [redacted] VICTIM ... [redacted] VOICE [redacted] THE WILDERNESS.
AT THE MOVEMENT WE'D MAKE ENOUGH NOISE TO GET THE WHOLE COUNTRY OFF ITS BUTT AND TAKING NOTICE.


INCLUDING FINDING A MAJOR ZAIBATSU GUILTY [redacted] FAULTILY IRRADIATING FOOD STUFFS, LEAVING 7000 CONSUMERS WITH TERMINAL CANCERS.


WE PROVED EXTREME NEGLIGENCE, WINNING RECORD DAMAGES FOR OUR CLIENTS.

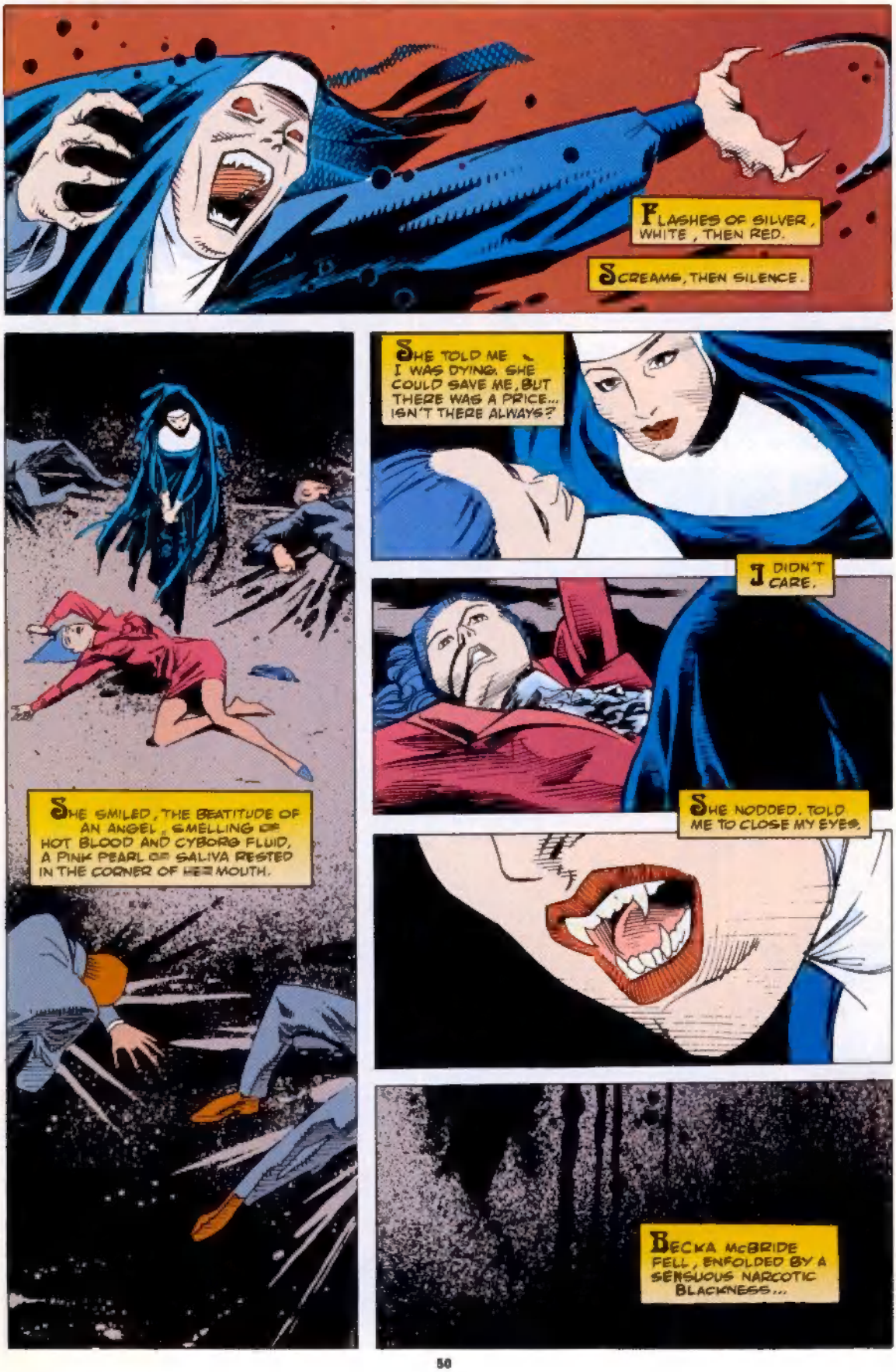
NOT [redacted] FOR AN ORGANIZATION RUN [redacted] SWEAT, DONATIONS AND GOOD WILL.

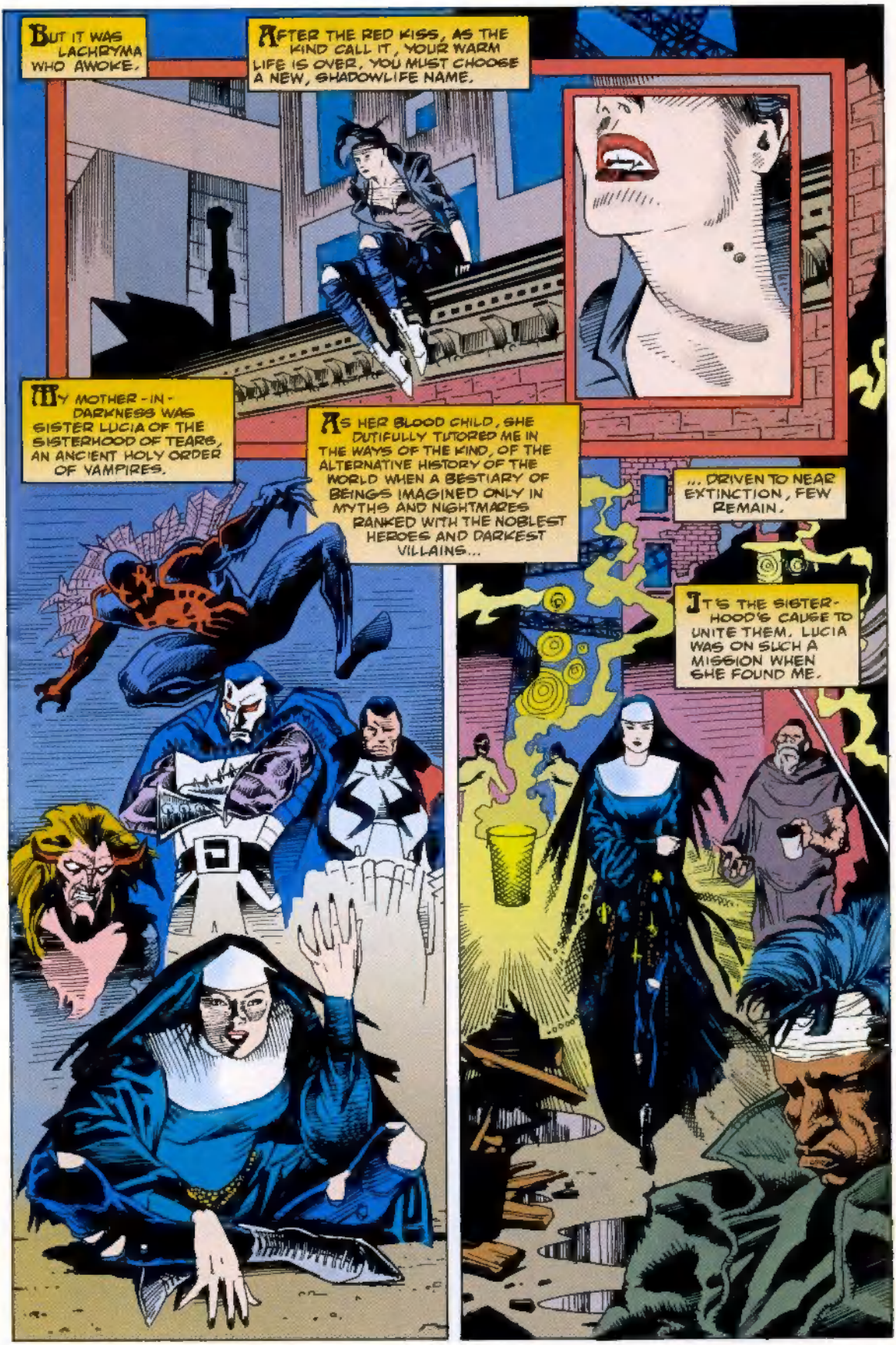

UNFORTUNATELY, WE ALSO WON THE UNDYING HATRED OF THE MAJOR CORPORATIONS.
...WHO EXPRESSED THEIR DISPLEASURE IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS.
I DON'T DOUBT THAT THEY HAD ENOUGH WEALTH AND INFLUENCE TO [redacted] ALL INTO CHANGING OUR CAREERS.
THAT WASN'T THE POINT. WE WERE TO BE MADE AN EXAMPLE OF... TO DETER OTHERS.

THERE'S AN OLD JAPANESE SAYING, "BUSINESS IS WAR"...
...AND THESE GUYS MEANT BUSINESS.
THEY WEREN'T JUST WARNING US OFF.
THEY WERE WIPING US OUT.
--ALL IN THE SPACE OF A SINGLE DAY.

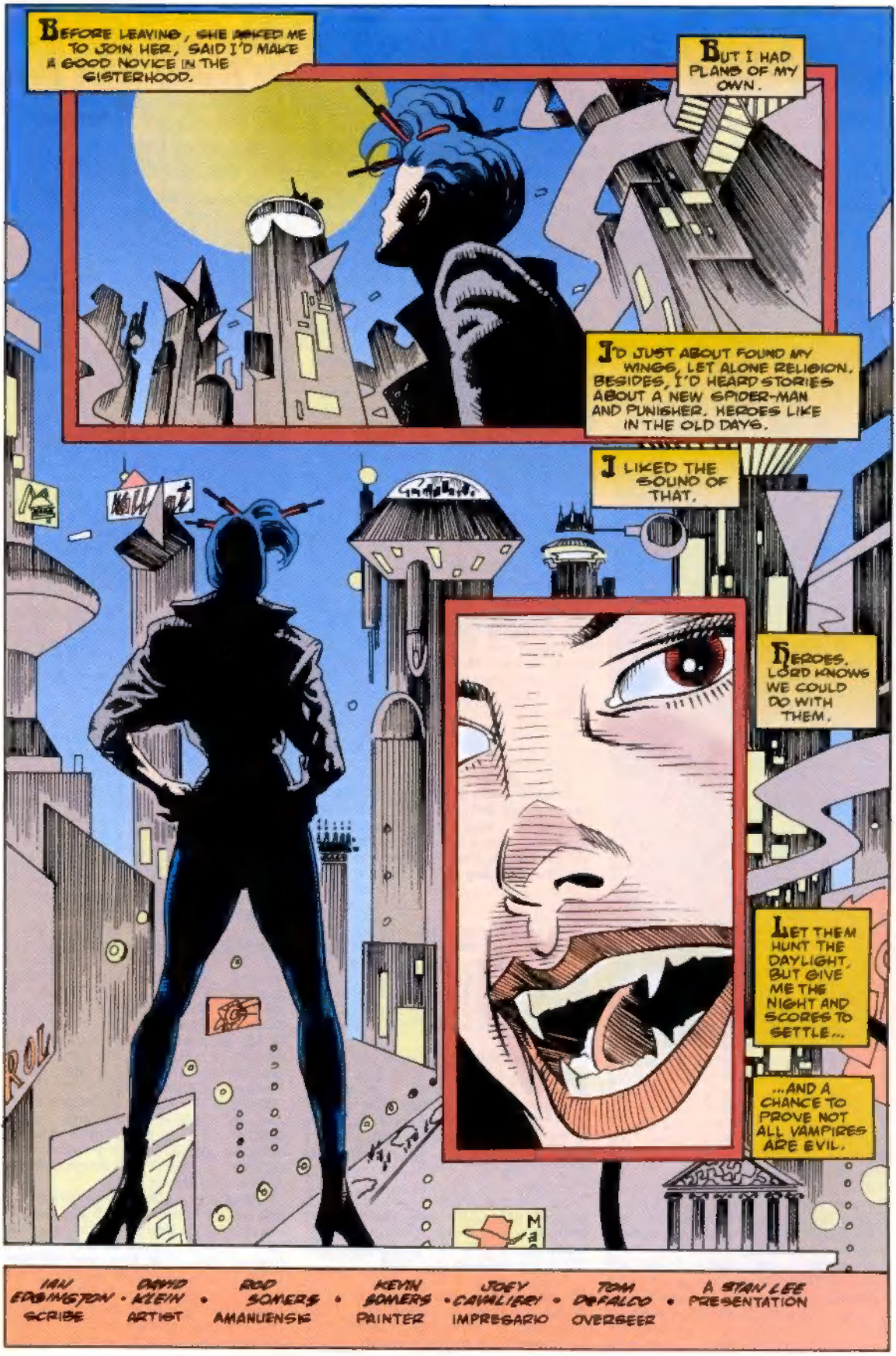
THEY CAME FOR ME WITH AN OFFER I COULDN'T REFUSE.
RESIST AND WE WILL KILL YOUR FAMILY, YOUR FRIENDS AND THEIR FAMILIES.
WE MEAN THEM NO HARM, ONLY YOU. BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.
VERY CLEVER. VERY PRACTICAL. WOULD I DIE TO SAVE THOSE I LOVED?
WITH DEATH THE ONLY OPTION, I FELT A STRANGE, ZEN-LIKE CALM DESCEND.
TOO LATE, I REALIZED, I'D BEEN HIT BY A LOW-LEVEL TELEPATH AND WAS BEING LED LIKE A LAMB TO SLAUGHTER...
LIKE I SAID... TOO LATE.

BUT THEY SCREWED UP. I WAS STILL ALIVE ... JUST.
PAIN SMEARED THE WORLD TO SLOW MOTION. I SAW THEM CROSS TO FINISH ME.
THEN SHE APPEARED LIKE THE WRAITH FROM THE GOTH SISTER KABUKI TV SHOW.
DESPITE THE SLOW-MO, [redacted] MOVED FASTER THAN ANY NORMAL PERSON SHOULD.
MY KILLER RAISED HIS GUN HAND.
ONLY IT WASN'T THERE ANYMORE


FLASHES OF SILVER, WHITE, THEN RED.
SCREAMS, THEN SILENCE.
SHE TOLD ME I WAS DYING. SHE COULD SAVE ME, BUT THERE WAS A PRICE... ISN'T THERE ALWAYS?
I DIDN'T CARE.
SHE NODDED. TOLD ME TO CLOSE MY EYES.
SHE SMILED, THE BEATITUDE OF AN ANGEL, SMELLING OF HOT BLOOD AND CYBORG FLUID, A PINK PEARL OF SALIVA RESTED IN THE CORNER OF HER MOUTH.
BECKA McBRIDE FELL, ENFOLDED BY A SENSUOUS NARCOTIC BLACKNESS...


But it was Lachryma who awoke.
After the red kiss, as the kind call it, your warm life is over. You must choose a new, shadowlife name.
My mother-in-darkness was Sister Lucia of the Sisterhood of Tears, an ancient holy order of vampires.
As her blood child, she dutifully tutored me in the ways of the kind, of the alternative history of the world when a bestiary of beings imagined only in myths and nightmares ranked with the noblest heroes and darkest villains...
... driven to near extinction, few remain.
It's the sisterhood's cause to unite them. Lucia was on such a mission when she found me.

She was a dedicated teacher.
As her daughter-in-darkness, she taught me how to seduce the warm to survive...
...to sup without killing.
...how our form warps light. Mirrors and lenses won't register us, but motion trackers and pressure sensors will...
...and best of all, how to phase my form.


BEFORE LEAVING, SHE ASKED ME TO JOIN HER, SAID I'D MAKE A GOOD NOVICE IN THE SISTERHOOD.
BUT I HAD PLANS OF MY OWN.
I'D JUST ABOUT FOUND MY WINGS, LET ALONE RELIGION. BESIDES, I'D HEARD STORIES ABOUT A NEW SPIDER-MAN AND PUNISHER, HEROES LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS.
I LIKED THE SOUND OF THAT.
HEROES. LORD KNOWS WE COULD DO WITH THEM.
LET THEM HUNT THE DAYLIGHT, BUT GIVE ME THE NIGHT AND SCORES TO SETTLE...
...AND A CHANCE TO PROVE NOT ALL VAMPIRES ARE EVIL.

IAN EDGINGTON • SCRIBE
DAVID KLEIN • ARTIST
ROD SOMERS • AMANUENSIS
KEVIN SOMERS • PAINTER
JOEY CAVALIERI • IMPRESARIO
TOM DEFALCO • OVERSEER
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION